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THE
WHITE STONE
OR,
A Learned and Choice
TREATISE
OF
ASSURANCE

VERY
Usefull for all, but especially weak Believers.

By Nathanael Culverwel, Master of Arts, and
lately Fellow of Emmanuel Colledge
in Cambridge.

2 P E T. I. IO. Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give
diligence to make your Calling and Election
sure.

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THE
WHITE STONE:

OR,

A Learned and Choice Treatise
of Assurance: very useful for all, but
especially weak Believers.

2 P E T. I. 10.

*Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to
make your Calling and Election sure.*

A Ssurance of salvation is a truth of great
and precious consequence, of sweet and
comfortable influence into the whole
life of a Christian: A truth which has scarce
had liberty to unmask and shew it self in
former times, and so has seldom or never
been

been fully treated of: A truth which could never be more welcome and seasonable then in times of danger and uncertainty; when all other things are in a doubtful and wavering condition, then to *make our Calling and Election sure*; to set up a spiritual *Militia*, and to put the soul in a posture of defence, in such an heavenly preparation, as it may be fit to meet with all conditions; *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in God*: He is just like the Philosophers good man, *τετράγωνος*, four-square, that, cast him where you will, like a Dy, he falls alwayes sure and square; He's built upon the same foundation that the whole Church of God is; He's built upon a *Rock*, and though the *waves dash*, and the *windes rise*, though the *storm encrease*, and the *floods beat in*, yet the *house stands*, the foundation's sure, 'tis built upon a *Rock*, and the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. He make him a pillar in the Temple of my God, as Christ promises to the Church of Philadelphia; even like one of those Pillars in Solomons Temple: The name of the one was Jachin, and of the other Booz; nothing but stability and strength, as the words imply; Christian assurance fortifies the soul, and prepares it against all conditions.

Now, as for the drift of our Apostle in this Chapter,

Chapter, 'twas to perswade the Christian Churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, to whom he wrote, that they would be fruitful and abundant in the graces of God, that they would grow in grace, and adde grace to grace, & so to increase in them all, till they came to a full and perfect stature in Christ: For *he that lacks these* (saith the Apostle) *is blinde, and cannot see a farre off: he is pore-blind, and cannot see so far as haven and heavenly things: And then he is forgetful too of the very first principles and rudiments of Grace; he forgets that he was purged from his former sins in the Laver of Regeneration in Baptisme, when he first entered into Covenant with God.*

*Wherefore do ye rather give diligence to make your Calling, &c. You that have a spiritual eye, and an enlightened soul, and can discern the things of God, and you that are mindful of the Covenant made with him, do you, brethren, give, &c. for this if any thing will make you fruitful in the works of grace; for by these you must maintain your assurance: these are the fruits and evidences of your salvation, the fruits of the spirit, and the first fruits of eternal life. Christians that make their Calling and Election sure, will and must be fruitful in good works. The Papists interpose *did uxor* in this verse;*

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and

and *Beza* saies indeed, that he found it in two ancient Copies, but though it be left out in the letter, yet we include it in the sense; good reason to leave it out in the text, because all the Greek Copies do, two only excepted; but yet we take it in in the interpretation, and freely acknowledge that no Christian can be assured of his salvation, who is not fruitful and abundant in good works, as *Fulke* and *Carthwright* do very well satisfie the *Rhemists* Translation.

In the words you have (1.) An usual compellation, *Brethren*. (2.) An Apostolical exhortation, and that to a double duty, one subordinate to another.

The (1.) and principal in intention, to make your Calling & Election sure. The (2.) (which is a means to the former,) to give diligence. And if you look upon the first again, you shall finde in it. (1.) A propriety, your Calling and Election. (2.) A method and order, first your Calling, and then your Election.

As for two of the particulars, wee'l but point at them, because they are not so properly intended in the words. For

1. The compellation is frequent and obvious in every Epistle; and shews

1. An Apostolical *Suada*, by which they were wont to winde and insinuate themselves with them

them; for affection does strongly engage the judgement. And all Rhetorick is little enough to win hearts, and prevail upon some mens spirits.

2. An Apostolical meekness: *Peter* a Star of the first magnitude, yet calls the lesser *Sporades* his brethren; A glorious and eminent Christian, a tall Cedar in *Lebanon*, yet acknowledges the meanest and lowest Christians his brethren. He learnt this of his Lord and Master, who was not ashamed to call them brethren; And shall the Disciple be above his Lord? 'Twere well if the Pope, who will needs be *Saint Peters* successor, would follow him in this. And who art thou, O prophane *Ismael*, that scoffest at the Children of the Promise under this very name and notion of the brethren?

2. And then as for the propriety, *ὁμῶν τῆς κλήσεως*, your Calling and Election.

1. None can be assured of another mans salvation, unless it be of such whom the Scripture tells us were in the state of Grace; whose sincerity is made famous to all the world; to whom the spirit hath set its broad seal, and given them a publick testimony that they were within the Covenant: for others we know in general, that there are a select and peculiar company whom God has chosen out as his jewels, but we cannot

say certainly and infallibly of such a particular person, of any *Individuum*, that he is a chosen vessel. Of some 'tis evident and apparent, that for the present, they are not in the state of grace; we are sure that as yet they are not efficaciously called, but we know not whether they be chosen; for others we have great hopes, and an high degree of probability, that they are truly born again, but yet we have no absolute certainty; for Hypocrisie will go so far, as that the best Criticks may be deceived. And a man can never tell certainly another mans sincerity, unless he could supply the place of conscience. An Hypocrite may spin so fair a thred, as that it may deceive his own eye, he may admire the cobweb, and not know himself to be the Spider; how much more easie may he deceive a stander by? And as for any extraordinary spirit of discerning, I know no ground for it, nor any promise of it in the Scriptures.

You'l say, this takes much from the communion of Saints, and from the sweetness of Christian society, if we cannot tell who are true members of the mystical body, fellow-brethren and fellow-heirs of the same promise.

1. Though we cannot tell absolutely and infallibly, yet we may know very probably; we know there are such *a peculiar people, a chosen Generation,*

neration, a Royal Priesthood, and we know that such and such are the likeliest in the world to be of this number, so as we have no reason to distrust them.

2. We must commend much of this to Gods providence, who very seldom suffers Hypocrites to go undetected; he that is the great searcher of hearts will be sure to meet with them: he hates a rotten heart, and will be sure to make it odious.

3. 'Tis fitting that this and many other privileges should be reserved for Heaven, that so we may long after that the more. There shall be a pure and unmixt communion, *the perfect beauty of holiness*. Nothing shall enter there that makes a lie, nothing of Hypocrisie; but glorious Angels, and glorified Saints sunning themselves in the presence of God, shall keep company together to all eternity.

2. Ὡς ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἑαυτοὺς. Christians are chiefly to look to their own Calling and Election. They are indeed bound to promote the good of others, and to look upon their lives with such Rules as Christianity allows; but they must be sure to dwell at home, and be acquainted with their own breasts, to make their own Calling and Election sure; for they cannot be sure of another mans condition, so as they may be of their own.

And

And thus we have dispatcht those two particulars which lay more collateral in the words, and were not directly intended in them. We now come to the very mind and drift of the Text, which branches it self into these four propositions, that will fully explain the nature of Assurance, though we keep within the bounds of the Text: It streams into these four particulars.

Observ. 1. A Christian may be assured of his salvation.

Observ. 2. Assurance of salvation requires all diligence.

Observ. 3. Assurance of salvation deserves all diligence. Both imply'd in *Give diligence*.

Observ. 4. The way to make our Election sure, is first to make our Calling sure.

And now you may look upon the Text, as on a pleasant Vine, situated in a fruitful place, *בקרן בן שמן*, i.e. in the horn of the Son of Oil or fatness, as the Prophet speaks, you may sit under the shadow of it, and its fruit will be sweet unto you. For you see how it has spread it self into spacious and goodly branches, such as are all laden with fair and swelling clusters; clusters of *Canaan*, that are ripened with those heavenly Sun-beams that shine out upon them; and richly filled with all spiritual sweetness. And
this

this fruit of the Vine will chear the heart of man to all eternity. As for us, we'll be sure to prune off all such sproutings and luxuriances of style, as may any way steal from the sap and strength of so great a truth in hand, as the Hebrews call those sproutings, *עלילין*, i.e. little Epicures, alwayes feasting upon the sweetness of the Tree, and putting the root to continual expences: we'll prune off all these. And if there be any Clusters lie lurking under the leaves, truth's not so obvious to every eye, we'll (if we can) spy them out. The Vintage will be long, we shall gather but a cluster at a time, and presse it in the Application.

A Christian may be assured of his Salvation, for Saint Peter would never exhort them to give diligence for an impossibility, for that which could not be obtained. We'll move in this order, and shew

Observ. 1. What Assurance is.

2. Arguments for Assurance.

3. The manner how Christians are assured.

4. The special times of Assurance.

5. Make Application.

I. And here first, what Assurance is.

'Tis a reflex act of the soul, by which a Christian clearly sees, that he is for the present in the state of grace, and so an heire apparent to glory;

or

or in the words of the Text, by which he knows his Calling and Election.

'Tis a reflex act, and so

1. Assurance is situated in the souls most noble, most closeted, most private, and most spiritual operation.

1.) Reflex acts are the most noble and most royal operations, the most rational and judicious acts of a most intelligent spirit. Reason is now in its exaltation, it sits upon the Throne, and exercises a Judge-like power; all the faculties of the soul must appear before its Tribunal, and give up a strict account, *πῶς παρ' ἐξουσίαν, τὴν δ' ἐξουσίαν, ἢ ὡς δὲ οὐκ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν*, as the Pythagoreans were wont to pose and catechize themselves: your inferior sensitive Creatures can go poring on upon a present object, and blunder on in a direct way, but are far enough from any reflex acts; although some talk of reflexiveness in sense too, (as to see that they see, or the like) but 'tis but a fancy of their own; Sensitive Creatures could never reach so high as a reflex act; and indeed sensual men know not what belong unto it, but the reasonable soul can retire into it self, and take a view and survey of its own actings.

2.) It is the most secret and retired operation; the soul withdrawes and bids the body farewell, and even here becomes an *anima separata*:

rata : it retires into its Closet, and bolts it self up, where none can peep in, none can evesdrop it.

3. The most refined and spiritual working of all, this is most abstracted from matter. The soul here does not commerce with outward drossy objects, but looks upon it self, fixes its eye upon its own face. This is the most spiritual employment of the soul, which does most strongly argue its immortality, and shewes it to be a spark of Divinity : How does the prime and fountain Being spend all Eternity, but in looking upon his own transcendent and glorious Essence? in viewing the bright Constellation of his Attributes, and seeing some shadowy and languishing Representations of himself in the glasse of the Creatures? 'Tis one of the chief works of a Christian, to reflect upon himself, *Vita est in se reflexio* ; as the grave Moralist *Seneca* speaks. The Prodigal came to himself, when he came to reflex acts, so 1 King. 8. 47. *When they shall turn to their own hearts, &c.*

II. But yet this working of the soul is but weak and transient, 'tis fleeting and desultory, it quickly vanishes ; which shews a great disorder and irregularity in the spirit, that that which is the noblest and most proper operation, that borders upon Divinity, men are least ver'st in it.

How

How rare is it for men to reflect upon their own conditions, to enter into an exact trial and examination of their own wayes? *Radius reflexus languet*, as the Opticks speak; The beam begins to be weary, and is ready to faint, it gives a weak and languishing Representation: 'tis true of intellectual beams too, *radius reflexus languet*. O how quickly are men weary of serious thoughts and considerations? they look upon them as melancholy interruptions, *turbida intervalla*. You had need of good arguments to persuade men to entertain a serious thought; outward objects, these divert the minde, and take it off from its greatest work. *As a man that sees his natural face in a glasse, (as St. James speaks) goes his way, and presently forgets what manner of man he was.* The soul scarce knowes its own visage, it looks abroad and is a stranger to it self. Many a mans soul has scarce look't upon it self all his life-time.

III. It consists in a reflex act, 1 John 2. 3. *γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἠγνώκαμεν.*) and so differs from faith; it is one thing to believe, and another thing to know that I believe. Our Divines go somewhat too far, (*Calvin, Perkins, &c.*) when they put all justifying faith in a full persuasion. *Ames* sayes, 'tis when they deal with the Papists who put it in a barre assent: but (me thinks

they should rather be more wary there, lest they give the enemy too much advantage. I rather think, that being men eminently pious, it was as they found it in their own souls, but all are not so strong in Christ. Assurance is the top and triumph of faith : faith, that's our victory, by which we overcome the world: but assurance, that's our triumph, by which *ὡς νικῶμεν*, we are more then Conquerors. 'Tis *flos fidei*, the very lustre and eminency of faith. Faith that's the Root, Assurance is the Top-branch, the flourishing of faith, faith with a glosse upon it. Justifying faith, that does not only dwell in the understanding, in *nudo assensu*, but requires an act of the will too, which must embrace a promise : indeed it calls for an act resulting from the whole soul, which must receive Christ offered unto it : but now assurance consists only in the minde, and so there you have the difference between faith of Adherence, and faith of Assurance. The first is an act of the whole soul, the latter is a work of the mind only ; it ariseth *e sensu quodam spirituali*, whereby we know and perceive that we believe. And when I say every believer may be assured of his salvation : I do n't say that every believer is assured of it ; No, every one is to labor for it, to give diligence, as our Apostle speaks : but every one has not yet obtained it : Assurance is not

of

of the Essence of a Christian; A man may be a true Child of God, and certainly saved, though he have not Assurance; He can have little sweetness and comfort without it, little joy and peace, but yet he may be in a safe, though in a sad condition. 'Tis required to the *benefit*, not to the *essence* of a Believer.

1. For the promise is made to the direct act, and not to the reflex. *Believe, and thou shalt be saved*, that's the voice of the Gospel: Not, know that thou dost believe. Now there is many a weak Christian that has faith, and yet does not know that he has it; Faith like a grain of mustard-seed, lies hid for a while, but it has a vigorous and operative spirit, and will work out in time, and spread it self into goodly branches. The least degree of faith, if it be true, brings salvation, but it does not bring assurance.

2. Many true Christians are in a state of desertion: all their light is eclipsed, their joy and comfort is put out. Nay, they look upon God, as an enemy; they are so far from being assured of their salvation, as that they verily think themselves in a lost condition, and yet all this while are in a true state of grace. Their condition is cloudy and dark, and very uncomfortable for the present, but yet 'tis safe; they are true believers.

leavers, and yet far enough from assurance. An excellent place in *Isaiab* for this, *Isa* 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God; some may truly fear God, and yet walk in darkness and have no light, not the least glimpse of assurance, no beam of Gods favourable countenance, yet let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* He may do this though he has no light, he may multiply direct acts, though he has no reflex acts. And here he may lay all the stress of his salvation, lean upon the grace of God in Christ, and with a sweet recumbency rest himself upon his God.

And this consideration may strengthen many bruised Reed, and revive many a drooping spirit, who for the present do not know that they beleeve, their case may be good for all this. Thou mayst be a true beleever, though thou art but a weak beleever; nay, though thou think thy self no beleever; I do not speak this that thou should rest in this condition; no, this were against the text; All must give diligence to make their Calling and Election sure: And a Christian can have little or no quiet, till he attain to assurance.

And thus you have seen the nature of assurance,
B
rance,

rance, we shall in the next place prove, that a Christian may be assured of his salvation.

1. *Ab esse ad posse.* Many Christian has been, and is assured of his salvation. Scarce any eminent Christian in the whole Book of God, but has set his seal to this truth, by his own particular experience. This is so clear as the adversaries themselves cannot deny, but that many choicest ones have had a full and satisfying light springing in upon their soul, and clearing their eternal condition to them. But they say 'tis by way of extraordinary Revelation, a special Priviledge vouchsafed to some few of Gods choicest Worthies by a rare indulgence. But this is spoken *gratis*, and is contrary to the present experience of many thousands of Christians; 1 *John* 5. 1. The very drift of St. *Johns* Epistle, is that Christians might have assurance. And besides, the *mediis* by which Christians attain to assurance, are common to all: All of them have the spirit dwelling in them: all have the fruits of the spirit, and a sweet testimony of their own spirits; though some have it in a weak measure, and cannot reach to a Prophecy: all come not to this full assurance, but yet these are the usual wayes, by which men attain to it, which have nothing in them of extraordinary Revelation: they are *via Regis*

and yet *via trita* too. Adde to this the scope of the text. St. Peter exhorts all to *give diligence to make their Calling and Election sure*, which, to what purpose were it, if it came only by special and extraordinary Revelation, which does not depend upon their diligence?

2. Search into the nature of faith it self, and you will see that it does much tend to assurance, and has some vicinity with it. There's a double act of faith, as the most acute *Ames* observes. (1.) The *actus primus*, by which I believe in Christ for the remission of my sins, and justifying of my person, which is properly justifying faith. (2.) *Actus ex fide emanans*, by which I believe that my sins are remitted, which does necessarily presuppose the former act: for thou hast no more reason to believe that thy sins are remitted, which does necessarily presuppose the former act: for thou hast no more reason to believe that thy sins are remitted then any other, till thou hast first received Christ for the Remission of thy sins. And this is contained in the Article of the Creed, *I believe the remission of sins*; not only in general, for this the Devils believe and yet tremble: but the Christian peculiarizes it, and drawes sweetness out of it, I believe the forgiveness of my sins. And of this latter 'tis meant, that *fidelis certus esse potest certitudine fi-*

Dei de Remissione peccatorum, Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, *οἱ πάντες ἐχούμεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν*, a sweet *εὐδοκία*, and holy security of spirit, for Assurance is nothing but *apex fidei*, the highest degree of faith. And 'tis the speech of *Aquinas*, *Quicumque habet scientiam vel fidem, certus est se habere; nam de ratione fidei est, ut homo sit certus dei his quorum habet fidem*. Faith does of its own accord raise and advance it self to Assurance, and that by reason of the applying and appropriating vertue which is in it; 'Tis faiths Idiom, my Lord, and my God: by a sweet Monopoly it engrosses all to its self; and yet leaves enough for others. Now a man that strongly grasps a Jewel in his hand, knowes that he has it; The hand of faith layes hold on Christ, and knowes that it receives him: so the want of Assurance in a beleever, does meerly flow from the weakness of faith, for though it be true, that to beleieve, and to know that I beleieve, be two distinct acts: yet this you must know and observe, that the strength and clearness of a direct act, will necessarily infer a reflex act. Those truths which I do clearly and evidently know, I also know that I know them. And that which I strongly beleieve, I know that I beleieve it: So the want of assurance comes from the imbecility of Faith. And the Papists that place faith only

in a meer assent, may well deny assurance; for they take away that clasping and closing power by which it should unite its self with its object.

3. From the nature of the promises: for this is the drift of the promises, (as 'tis *Heb. 6. 18.*) *that the heirs of promise might have strong consolation*: Now a believer can have but weak and unstable comfort without Assurance. What if all the clusters of *Canaan* were laid on an heap? What if all the Cordials of the Gospel were strained into one cup? were the soul any thing the better if it must only tantalize, see them and want them? What sweetness can a Christian draw from a promise till he knowes that it belongs unto him? Will this enrich a man, to know that there are Pearls and Diamonds in the world? Will this satisfy a fainting Israelite, to know that there is a *Canaan*, a land that flows with milk and honey, although (it may be) he shall ne're come neer't? Nay, is it not a greater sting and vexation for the soul to think, I know there are pure fountains and pleasant streams, but yet I may die with thirst: ther are spiritual dainties, and precious delicacies, but I am not sure to have one taste of them: many a promise looks with a pleasant and propitious eye, but 'tis not fixt upon my soul; so that take

away a Christians interest and propriety in a promise, and what becomes of his consolation? God hath given his word, his oath, his seal, his earnest, and all to this very end, that a poor Christian may be assured of his salvation, that he might have a strong and vigorous consolation; so that to deny him this, is to annihilate the word of God, to frustrate the oath of God, to evacuate the seal of God, and as much as in them lies to make him lose his earnest, and to leave the soul in an intricate and perplexed condition.

4. From the nature of Christian hope; there's a vast difference between the Moralists hope, and that which is the Theological grace, and yet this is scarce took notice of; they require these three ingredients into the object of hope: that it must be (1.) *bonum*, (2.) *futurum*, (3.) *incertum*; but Christian hope is certain and infallible, it looks upon good as to come, and as certain to come; indeed 'tis nothing but *αἰμαίνω*, as *Clem. Alexand.* elegantly, blood running in the veins of Faith; if hopes expire, Faith will presently bleed to death. That good which Faith sees, Hope waits for; Faith eyes it as present, but yet at a distance, and hope tarries for it till it come. Christian hope is nothing but a waiting and expectation of a certain good; you have

have a pregnant text for this in Heb. 6. 19. *Which hope we have as an Anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.* Hope were but a poor Anchor if it should leave the soul to the courtesie of a wave, to the clemency of a Rock, to the disposing of a storm. Hope were but a weak Anchor, if it should let the soul be lost with uncertainties, if it should leave it in danger of shipwrack. I, but this Anchor is *ἀσφαλὴς π. κ. βεβαια*, and it pierces within the vail, it will be sure to have fast hold, 'twill fix upon heaven it self, upon the *sanctum sanctorum*. See another, Rom. 5. 2. *Καυχώμεθα ἐν ἐλπίδι*; Now that's a poor glory to triumph in uncertainties, to triumph before the victory; little cause of joy and exaltation, till the soul be provided for eternity. I can tell you the very possibility of being damned, is enough to extinguish joy; so that till the soul come to be in a safe condition, safe for all eternity, and till it know it self to be in this safe condition, 'tis so far from being joyful, as that it cannot tell how to be quiet. A probable hope will bear up and support the soul, *a door of hope in the valley of Achor*: but it will not quiet and satisfy the soul. The least dawning of hope in the initials of grace, does mightily cherish and encourage the soul. O how pleasant are the eyelids of the morning! how welcom is the day-

break after a dark and disconsolate night ! Nay, the very possibility of being saved, was that which first drew us all to look after heaven ; the very consideration, that there was *Balme in Gilead* ; But the weary soul will ne'r rest here, the Dove will ne'r take this for an Ark : No, the beams of Gods love will shine out stronger and brighter upon the soul, and ripen his hope into assurance, Christian hope when 'tis in its full vigour, is all one with assurance, *Rom. 5. 5.* ἡ δ' ἐλπίς ἐκταίσχυνται, but if hope could be frustrated, it then might make ashamed : disappointment would cause a blush : hope differ'd will make the heart sick, and uncertain hope will scarce make the soul well ; a Christians hope is not like that of *Pandora*, which may flie out of the box, and bid the soul farewell : no, 'twill ne'r vanish, till it be swallowed up in fruition. The hope of the Hypocrite, 'tis as his righteousness, like the morning-dew : but the hope of a Christian 'tis like the morning-light, the least beam of it shall commence into a compleat Sun-shine, 'tis *Aurora gaudii*, and it shall shine out brighter and brighter till perfect day. We shall further clear this truth, if you consider the manner how Christians are assured of their salvation, the third thing you propounded.

- i By the graces of God which are in them, those

those precious seeds of mortality, and the prints of the spirit, by which they are sealed to the day of Redemption. Grace is the spirits stamp, by which it marks the soul for its own; the first fruits of the spirit, the least grace, if true and sincere, is sufficient to salvation, and therefore the sense of the least grace is sufficient to assurance.

Object. But how shall the soul know that it has these graces in truth, and not in shadow and colour only? how shall it be certain that these are not counterfeit and painted?

Sol. There might be given many signs and characters of true grace, that it must flow from a principle of sincerity from a principle of love, that it must be comfortable to the grace of Christ; but all this will not satisfy, for the soul will still question how shall I know that my graces are such? so then that which we must ultimately resolve it into, is that in Rom. 8. 16. For in the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing shall be established; Now we have here two witnesses, *omni exceptione majores*, we have a double Testimony, a twin-Testimony. The same spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the Sons of God; *ομμαςτις*, he confirms what the other says; both the witnesses do fully agree, and make up
one

one entire testimony, the soul may say here, as *Paul, Rom. 9. 1. I speak the truth, I lie not, my Conscience bearing me witnesse by the Holy Ghost.*

The whole work of Assurance is summed up in this practical Syllogism, *Whosoever believes shall be saved: but I believe, and so shall certainly be saved.* The Assumption is put out of doubt.

1. Conscience comes in with a full testimony: And if natural Conscience be a thousand witnesses, then sure an enlightened and sanctified Conscience can be no lesse then ten thousand; *1 John 3. 10. He that believes has a witness in himself, a Certificate in his own breast, τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ:* for as the same Apostle, *1 John 3. 20. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. καρδία* here is the same with conscience, for the Hebrews have no other word for Conscience but לב. So then, if our heart acquit us, *καρπὸν ἔχουσιν*, we have as much liberty as we can desire. It feares not now the edge of the Law, nor the fiery darts of Satan: it doth not stagger with sense of its own weakness and unworthiness, but comes with confidence to the Throne of grace.

Obj. 1. *Jer. 17. 9. עקב הלב מרר. Supplativum Cor præ omnibus, so Arias Montanus,*

nus, *ἡ ψυχή*, & *inscrutable*, *desperabile*, so Hierome and our Translation, *desperately wicked*: 'tis properly *insanabile*. Some think Paul alludes to this place, and does explain it in Rom. 2. 5. *κατὰ τὴν σκληρότητα σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν*. The Seventy read the words, *ἡ ψυχή*, and translate it accordingly.

Sol. 1. Now as for the minde of the place: I finde Expositors of great name and worth, understanding it of the unregenerate heart, of the heart of man, that is in the state of corrupt nature, of whom 'tis said, that *All the imaginations of the thoughts of mans heart, are altogether evil continually*.

Sol. 2. The drift of the text is, to shew the deceitfulness of mens hearts in respect of others, for 'tis brought in by way of Objection. The Jewes they are cunning and subtle, and can delude the Prophets, and so think to evade the Curse. No; but *I the Lord search the hearts*: I have a fair window, an open prospect into the most reserved spirit: 'tis as clear as Chrystal to my eye.

Sol. 3. Yet 'tis true, that the most sincere heart is very deceitful, the heart of a David, of a man after Gods own heart, is full of windings and turnings, and many deviations, such secret passages as himself knowes not of. For *who hath known the error of his wayes*? No man yet had
such

such a piercing insight into his own soul as to be acquainted with every motion of it. None can so anatomize his own spirit that it shall be *συμὴ μαὶ τετραχολισμένη*, so as every vein and nerve and muscle shall be obvious and apparent to his eye; But what does this hinder, but that the general frame and bent of the spirit, the bias and inclination of the soul may be clearly known? The soul knows which way its faculties stream with most vehemency. Conscience cannot be brib'd, 'twil give in the true judgement, especially an inlightned conscience. There's none, but if he search and examine his own soul in a strict and impartial manner, may know whether he be sincere and cordial or no. There's none but may know the general frame and temper of his spirit, *1 Cor. 2. 11. Who knowes the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him?* The Testimony of conscience is certain and infallible. Many a wicked man by this is assured, that for the present he is in a miserable and damnable condition; he knows certainly that as yet he is out of the Covenant; and hence many times there are lightening flashes of terror flie in his face, the very sparks of Hell compass him about. Does not thy Conscience often tell thee, O prophane wretch, that as yet thou art a Child of wrath, and galloping to dam-

damnation with a full Carriere? why then may not the heart of a Christian tell him as certainly, that he is a Child of God by adoption, and an heir of promise? nay, speak O Christian, where e're thou art, and speak aloud that we may hear thee, does not thy own soul tell thee, that thou art in a sure and happy condition? so sure as *nothing shall be able to separate thee from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Why are Christians so often enjoyned, προαΐνον, δοκιμαζον, to try their own spirits, if that after all their diligence they can't tell what to think of them? All uses of examination were vain and frivolous, which yet are the very life and spirits of preaching. And *Ames* tells us of a *donum discretionis*, which Christians have, by which they can discern true grace from counterfeit. There are certain *νεμεσια* by which they may distinguish them and judge of them in themselves, though not in others certainly.

Object. 2. If all thus by the testimony of conscience may know their own frame of spirit, whether they be upright or no; why then are not all true Christians assured of their salvation? what have they not their consciences and hearts about them?

Sol. 1. Many are not sufficiently acquainted with their own spirits, they do not keep so strict

a watch over themselves, they are not verif in their own hearts, they don't try and search their ways, they have riches and a treasure, and do not know of it.

Sol. 2. It is in fo great and weighty a matter : Eternity does fo amaze and swallow up the thoughts, as that they are ready to tremble, where they are certain and fecure ; A man on the top of a Tower knows that he is fafe enough, and yet when he looks down he is afraid of falling.

3. Confcience fometimes gives a dark and cloudy testimony, when 'tis difquieted and charged with new guilt, the foul can't fo clearly read its evidences. And then it begins to question its condition. It may be it has dealt hypocritically in fome one particular; and now it begins to question all its fincerity.

We do not fay then that Confcience does al- ways give a clear and full testimony, but fometimes it does, and that with abfolute certainty.

2. Now comes in the fecond witnefs, and the great and fupreme testimony of *the fpirit him- felf, witneffing with our fpirits that we are the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 16.* we render it, *the fame fpi- rit*, but in the fountain is *the fpirit it felf*, not τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, but αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα, not only the gifts

gifts and graces of the spirit, but the spirit it self.

Object. This testimony seems to be coincident with the other, for a man can't tell his own sincerity: 'tis the spirit that must reveal a man to himself; The soul can't see its own face unless the spirit unmask it; the spirit is more present and conversant with the soul, then the soul is with it self. He does not only know our hearts, but *he is greater then our hearts, and knowes all things.*

Sol. We'll easily grant, that to the least motion in spirituals, there is necessarily required the concurrence of the Holy Ghost; but withall, we say that there's a mighty difference between working of the spirit, and the testimony of the spirit. There's a powerful and efficacious work of the spirit, when faith is wrought in the soul: but yet there is not the testimony of the spirit, for every believer has not presently the seal set to him: so that though the testimony of our own spirit cannot be without the help and influence of the spirit, yet 'tis clearly distinct from the Testimony of the spirit; for here the spirit does enable the soul to see its graces by a present light, by the soules light; But when it comes with a testimony, then it brings a new light of its own, and lends the soul some auxiliary beams,

beams, for the more clear and full revealing of it, so that you see according to that plain text in the Romans, *There are two distinct Testimonies, the spirit witnessing with our spirits*; And St. John is the most expresse, *Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*. Now the testimony of the spirit is

1. A clear testimony, a full and satisfying light springs in upon the soul, scatters all Clouds, all doubts and questions; 'tis as evident as any demonstration; 1 John 3. 24. *By this we know that he dwells in us, by the spirit which he hath given us*. Christ when he went to heaven, he left the Comforter, not only to the Church in general, but to every particular soul that be-
 lieves, to print his love upon the soul,
 ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μαρτυρῆσις ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, ἡ ἡμεῶν ἀπολογία,
 ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ἡ ἀγγελος, ἡ ἀρχαγγελος, &c.
 Chrysost. If a creature, though never so glitter-
 ing, should tell men so, there might still be some
 hesitancy; I, but the spirit witnesses. The se-
 cret and inward testimony of the spirit is as
 strong and efficacious; nay, more powerful then
 if 'twere with an outward voice. If an Angel
 from Heaven were sent on purpose to a Christian
 by Christ himself; Go tell him that I love him,
 that I shed my blood for him, &c. 'twere not
 so certain.

2. A sure testimony, for 'tis the witness of the spirit, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived; μαρτυρῶν ἐκ τῶν διὸς δεικτῶν, *sufficientissimum Testimonium*, as *Cajetan*.

1. He can't deceive, for he is truth it self.

2. He can't be deceived, for he is all Eye, Omniscience it self.

And he does ἐκεῖθεν τὰ βλάστησιν, he dwells in the breast and bosom of God: he is fully acquainted with the minde of God, and he reveals it to the soul. The Papists make the spirits testimony to bring but a conjectural certainty. But the most renowned *Perkins* answers them, (1.) That 'tis such a certainty as makes them cry *Abba Father*: not only think so, and speak so, but with all courage, confidence, intention of spirit, cry *Abba Father*. (2.) It is opposed to the spirit of bondage, and therefore takes away doubtings and tremblings. (3.) The very end why the Holy Ghost comes to the soul, is to make all sure, and therefore is called a seal and an earnest. Now he assures the soul

1. By a powerful Application of the promise; for as faith does appropriate the promise on our part, so the spirit applies it on Gods part. As Satan, that lying spirit, casts in doubts and fears, and tremblings, and working upon the remainder of corruption, plots against the peace and

well being of the soul; so this holy spirit, by the comforting, working upon that principle of grace, which he himself hath planted in the heart of a Christian, does study and contrive the welfare of a beleever. And as the spirit of bondage does strongly apply wrath and the curse; so this sweet spirit of Adoption applyes grace and mercy. The spirit of bondage strikes terror into the soul, by a mighty Application of wrath; this curse flames against thee; this threatening is shot off against thee; these vials of wrath are prepared for thy soul: So the spirit of adoption does set on strong and vigorous apprehensions of mercy; this pearl of price, 'tis to enrich thee; these Evangelical cordials, are to revive thee; this balm in *Gilead* is prepared for thy soul. The spirit of Adoption speaks love and peace, and pardon; and that by particular Application of the promise to us; As when the promise of Remission of sins, and life everlasting by Christ is generally propounded in the Ministry of the word, the holy Ghost does particularly apply it to the heart of such a one, and does seal up the promise to the soul; That when faith sayes, this promise is mine, this belongs to me: the spirit does strongly apply it, this is thine indeed; and this does belong to thee: These are the secret ~~whisperings~~, the whisperings and breathings of the holy

holy spirit, the secret בְּת קוֹר by which it converses with the soul ; The spirit of God has free and often intercourse with a believing spirit. And this is far enough from any vain Enthusiasme, any extraordinary Revelation ; 'tis no imaginary thing, but such as many a soul is acquainted with, and has tasted of.

2. By a bright irradiation beaming out upon the soul, and clearing its evidences, discovering its graces, and shewing them to be true and genuine; not only by giving the soul a spirit of discerning, (for that we referred to the former Testimony) but the spirit brings in its own light, and makes those graces, which were visible before, more eminently conspicuous ; *The spirit of a man, was the Candle of the Lord,* (as the wise man speaks) which gave a weaker and dimmer light, but yet such as was enough to manifest the Object ; I, but now there are glorious Sunbeams come rushing in upon the spirit, the spirit shines in the soul with healing under his wings. The graces of the spirit, these flow, like a pure and Christalline stream ; and the light of the spirit shines out upon them, and gilds the water. See a plain text for this, *1 Cor. 2. 12. We have received the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God :* Light sets a glosse upon all the world, and

this spiritual light gives a lustre and orieny to graces ; it puts a beauty upon them, such as the soul is much taken with ; We have received an heavenly light, that we may see heavenly things. Now thou knowest thy faith to be lively, and thy Repentance to be sound, thy sorrow to be ingenuous, and thy obedience sincere ; thy love to be unfained, and thy fear to be filial : for the Spirit has set his Seal to all thy graces, and has acknowledged them for his own.

Object. 1. O but many have thought they have had the spirit, when they had it not: and the Devil, that foul spirit, can transform himself into an Angel of light.

Sol. But 1. One mans self-deceit does not prejudice anothers certainty. What if one man flatter himself in a false light, and please himself in a meer shadow of assurance ; must all men necessarily follow his example ? A man that's in a dream thinks himself awake, when he is not : I, but (hope) for all this, a man that is awake, may certainly know that he is so. Many a Traveller has thought himself in the right way, when he has been out of it : and yet this does not hinder but that he that's well acquainted with the Road, may know that he is in his way. What if one man take Copper for Gold, must all men

do so too? One mans folly and vanity does not at all hinder anothers Assurance.

2. The spirit comes with a convincing beam; Light shews both it self and other things too; the Sun by its glorious beams does paraphrase and comment upon its own glittering Essence; and the spirit displayes himself to the soul, and gives a full manifestation of his own presence. The soul knowes the aspect of the spirit, better then we do the face of a friend. The light of a presumptuous wretch, is like a blazing Comet, and does but portend his ruine: it carries a venomous and malignant influence in it; and the light of an hypocrite is but a flash, and coruscation, very brief and transient. A man may sooner take a glow-worm for the Sun, then an experienced Christian can take a false delusion for the light of the spirit.

3. There is a twin-light springing from the word and the spirit. *Try the spirits; To the Law, to the Testimony: if they speak not according to the rule, it is because there is no morning in them.*

The Scripture was all endited by the spirit, and the spirit cannot contradict himself: You do but grieve the spirit, (whoer'e you are) that pretend to any Revelation, that agrees not with the Word; Nay, the spirit has reveal'd his whole minde in the word, and will give no other Re-

velation, any otherwise then we have spoken of. And whosoever he is that rebels against the light of the Word, he shall never have the light of the Spirit. Whilst thou dost not follow the directing light of the spirit, thou shalt never have the quickening and cherishing beams of it.

And thus you have heard the double Testimony: the Spirit witnessing with our Spirit, and now you must know, that

1. The Testimony of Gods Spirit is alwayes accompanied with the Testimony of our own spirit: and so that word *Rom. 8.* is significant, *συμμαρτυροῖ* which is properly of one, that does only confirm what the other sayes: But then

2. A man may have the testimony of his own spirit, that has not the witness of Gods spirit. The Spirit as it breaths when it pleases, so it shines when it pleases too: Well then, the question is, whether the Christian, who has but the single testimony of his own spirit, may be assured of his salvation?

Mr. Perkins propounds the case, and resolves it thus: If the testimony of the Spirit be wanting, then the other testimony, the sanctification of heart, will suffice to assure us. We know it sufficiently to be true, and not painted fire, if there be heat, though there be no flame; thus he: And his meaning is, as indeed the thing is, that it is a true assurance, though not so bright

an assurance. I may see a thing certainly by the light of a Candle, and yet I may see it more clearly by the light of the Sun. And for my part, I think that certainty does not consist *in puncto*, but may admit of a latitude; and receive *magis* and *minus*: And the contrary principle does delude many. There's an absolute and infallible certainty in faith, and by this I know the creation of the World: well, but besides this, I know it by reason and by unquestionable demonstration, and I think this adds to my certainty. So here; though one testimony be enough for Assurance, yet a double testimony makes it more glorious. Certainty admits of degrees, and a man may be more certain of a thing, that he is already certain of. Take two Christians, both may be assured of their salvation; and yet one may have a clearer assurance than the other has: One may have a double testimony, and another but a single, Nay, the same soul may have at one time a double testimony, and at another but a single. The light of the spirit may and does often withdraw it self, and leave only the witness of our own spirit; and yet then the soul has assurance. But yet the soul should aim at the highest Plerophory, at the top of assurance: Then *quench not the spirit*, lest you put out your own joy; grieve not so sweet an inhabitant,

tant, that comes to comfort you, give him no cause to withdraw his light.

Quest. But what if the soul have not the witness of Gods spirit, nor of its own spirit neither? What if it have no present light, no certain evidence?

Ans. There's one way left yet; have recourse to former Assurance. Dost thou certainly know and remember, that once thou hadst a sweet serenity of soul? that an enlightened conscience upon good grounds, did speak peace unto thee? Didst thou never see the light of the spirit crowning thy soul with satisfying beams? Art thou sure that once he did bear witness with thy spirit, that thou wert the Child of God? Why then, be sure still that thou art in the same condition; for there's no total falling from grace. Thy light (it may be) is put out for the present: Conscience does not speak so friendly to thee, as 'twas wont. And thou hast grieved the spirit, and he has took it unkindly, and has held off his light for a while: But now canst thou remember the dayes of old, when the Rock pour'd out Oil unto thee, when thy branch was green and flourishing? Canst thou certainly recall thy former Assurance? Canst tell the time when the spirit did set his seal unto thee, and confirmed all thine Evidences? Well then, lay down

down but perseverance for a ground, and thou art still assured of thy salvation: The spirits testimony is of an eternal truth: *And heaven and earth shall sooner passe away, then one beam of this light shall vanish*, though now it be not apparent to thy eye. When the soul for the present is cloudy and dark, it may cherish it self with former assurance. Now that a soul may have no sensible Assurance for the present, and yet may remember former Assurance, is clear in that holy man *David*, Psal. 51. 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.* *Dauids* joy was extinguisht, and he would fain have it lighted again: Three things imply'd in the word *Restore*. 1. That for the present it was taken away. 2. That once he had it. 3. He remembers that he had it, and therefore prays, *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit*; that was the spring of *Dauids* joy, the testimony of the spirit witnessing with his spirit, was that which did uphold and staffe up the soul. *Dauids* own spirit was now very unquiet, and Gods spirit did withdraw himself; and now the best refreshment that *David* has, is from former Assurance. 'Tis true, there is some sadness and bitterness in this consideration, when a Christian shall think what he has lost. O, my soul was once a beautiful Temple,

Temple, full of fair windows, and goodly prospects, and glorious light; I could take a prospect of *Canaan* when I pleased, but now I dwell in the tents of *Kedar*, nothing but blackness and darkness. There is trouble and a sting in these thoughts; but yet there is some honey and sweetness too: Was I not once a friend of God, and does he use to forsake his friends? Did he not once speak peace to thee, and does he use to recall his words? Did not he shed his love in thy heart, and is not his love immortal? Did not his spirit seal up thy soul, and is not the print of that seal indeleble? speak, did not he once shew thee thy name written with his own hand in the Book of life, and does he use to blot out what he has written? Dost not thou remember, did not he smile upon thee in such and such an Ordinance, and are his smiles deceitful? O no! rest satisfied, O Christian soul, and quiet thy self in those rich expressions of his love, which he has formerly bestowed upon thee; O question not his goodness, but prepare thy self for receiving of it. The streams are dried up, but yet the Fountain is full; thou hast had some tastes of it, though now thou art dry and thirsty: and thou shalt have in time fresh bubblings up of his grace towards thee; in the interim, take this for a cordial. Those former drops

drops which thou hast tasted of it, will cherish thy soul to all eternity. The least drop of grace shall never be exhausted, the least spark of true joy shall never be extinguish't; all the floods that the Dragon can vomit out of his mouth, shall never be able to quench it. But then

4. Put the case thus, that there be no Sun-light, nor Starre-light, nor reliques of former light; neither the testimony of Gods spirit, nor of our own spirits, nor any recalling of former assurance; what must the soul do now? Now look to the dawning of the day, to the first *Crepusculum*; look now to the initials of grace, to the preface of sanctification. Thou canst not, it may be, shew any fair and lively pourtraicture; but hast thou the first draughts and rudiments of holiness? Thou hast not any goodly & delicious clusters of *Canaan*; O but see if the tender grape do bud. There are not any ripe fruits of the spirit, but yet are there som blossomings of holiness? thy graces don't flow out into so full & fair a stream; but canst thou see any bubblings up of goodness in thee? Thou hast not yet the strength a well grown Christian; well, but is there the *vagitus* of an Infant? Look now to the souls prizing of a Christ, to the whimperings after the breast, to the breathings and longings after its Beloved, thoughts upon him, desires for him, endeavors after him, there's much comfort & sweetness

ness in these : 1, and some kind of assurance For

1. Be sure, that God that has begun this great work in thee, will never give over till it be full and compleat ; he does not use to leave his work imperfect. The least tendency to goodness is cherished by him ; The very first motion, 'tis of his own planting, and it shall lack for no watering, and he himself will give it an increase.

2. The least seed of grace, as 'tis choice and precious ; so 'tis very vigorous and operative, it will never leave working till Christ be formed in thee. *Who hath despised the day of small things?* Thy spark may spread it self into a flame, and thy tender bud may flourish, and bring forth much fruit. He that is richest in grace, begun with as little a stock. He that is now a tall Cedar, was once a tender plant. Improve but present strength, and God will send thee in fresh supplies, Auxiliary forces, and thou shalt walk 'rom strength to strength, till thou appearest before God in glory. Thy light shall shine out brighter and brighter till perfect day, *Donec stabiliatur dies*, according to the *Syriac*, till thou comest to a firm and well established assurance. The least peeping out of light, the least dawning of the day is pleasant and comfortable.

5. If thou canst not spy out any grace in thy self, borrow light of another. Lay open thy soul to an Interpreter, one of a thousand, he

may explain thy condition, and paraphrase upon thy soul better then thou thy self canst. This Interpreter, one of a thousand may more exactly analyse thy condition, and shew the context and coherence of it. 'Tis the speech of *Elihu*, Job 33. 23. There meets him a Messenger, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto him his uprightness; Hee'l shew thee, here's grace, and there's grace; here's a true pearl, and there's a spark though in ashes, and there's an evidence. A discerning and experienced Christian may shew thee cause of joy, when thou canst finde none thy self. 'Tis no shame to borrow light, especially spiritual light.

6. One step further. What if after all this there be not the least glimmering of light, nothing of a spark, nothing of a beam; a total eclipse, all Clouds and blackness and darkness, and the very valley of the shadow of death? yet even here will we fear none ill.

7. When reflex acts are wanting, be sure to multiply direct acts: when there is no certainty of Evidence, yet even then have a certainty of Adherence and Recumbency. Now grasp a Promise, take fast hold of that precious offer, rolle thy self upon the free grace of a God in Christ; lay all the stresse of thy salvation upon it, with a gallant and heroical resolution; *If I perish, I perish.* Thus *Job*, *Though he kill me, yet*

will I trust in him. Thus our Saviour, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And this must needs be a strong act of faith, even then to rely upon God when he seems thine enemy; to trust in an angry and displeased God, and when he frowns on thee, yet then to lean upon him. Like men ready to be drowned, be sure to take fast hold; cast Anchor, though in the dark.

2. Study self-denyal, and though thou long and breath after Assurance; yet resign up thy self wholly to his will, and be content to want assurance, if he see it best for thee. Take heed of murmuring in the wilderness, in the saddest and most deserted condition. Throw thy self at his feet, with this resolution; *O my God, I'll blesse thee for those eternal treasures of sweetness that are in thy self, though I should never taste of them: I'll blesse thee for those smiles of thy face, which thou bestowest upon others, though thou wilt not cast one gracious look upon my soul: I'll blesse thee for those rich offers of grace thou makest unto me; though I have not a heart to lay hold of them.*

3. Put thy soul into a waiting posture; and stay till he please to display some of himself unto thee, and make some of his goodness pat before thee. One beam of his countenance, one gracious smile, one propitious glance of his eye

the least crumb of the hidden Manna; 'tis worth waiting for all thy life-time. And when I speak of waiting, I mean not that the soul should stand still, and do nothing; no, this were against the Text, *Give diligence, &c.* improve all present strength, wait upon him in prayer, beg one glimpse of him, be earnest for a taste, for a relish of the hidden Manna; and wait upon him in his Ordinances, here the spirit breathes; here Manna's rained down, here God shews his face, here is the sealing place, the spirit confirms the word, and prints it upon thy soul. Thus wait upon him in his own way; I, and wait upon him in his own time too, don't think time tedious; He that beleeves, makes not haste, which St. Paul renders; *He that beleeves is not ashamed*; as if to make haste and be ashamed were all one. God will wonderfully prepare the soul, that he means to fill with his love. Assurance is too precious a thing to be powered into every spirit; He won't put new wine into old bottles. God is all this while making thee more capable of his love; and though for the present thou hast no assurance, yet thus trusting and waiting upon him, thou art in a great tendency to it. And put the worst that can be imagined, that thou shouldst die under a Cloud; yet thy condition were safe, and thou shalt come then to a full assurance; nay, to

to a full possession of thine inheritance, and thou shalt see the glorious Sun-shine of the face of God, a beam of which thou didst so much long for here.

We come now to the fourth particular : those special sealing times, when Christians have their Assurance and Plerophory.

1. Many times at their first conversion, God does then seal up the work of grace in the soul. When the spirit of bondage has past upon the soul, and by a strong conviction, has applied particularly guilt and wrath unto it; the fatal sentence is pronounc'd, and the soul is filled with the scorching pre-apprehensions of hell and damnation, & trembles at the very thought of eternity : Now for the Gospel to bring the welcom newes of a pardon, and for the spirit of adoption to apply grace and mercy unto the soul : for the prison-doors to be broken open, and a poor captive set at liberty ; to have all the Chains and fetters beaten off, and to be brought into a marvellous light; to have all the balm of *Gilead* powered into him, Evangelical fruitions and cordials prepared for him, and which is the very extraction and quintessence of all, the love of a Saviour shed into his heart. What strong impressions of joy, think you, may there be in such a soul ? What precious infu-

ons of spiritual sweetness? What secret spring-
ings and elevations of spirit? What triumphs,
what Jubilees, what love-raptures? *I am my
Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* I must appeal
to your breasts that have found this great and
heavenly work wrought upon your soul; 'tis
you only that have tasted the joy of the holy
Ghost, that is glorious and unspeakable. And
do you tell us, had not ye then the first relish of
the hidden Manna? was not it very sweet and
delicious? hadst not thou then the first glimpse
of the *White Stone*? and was not it very bright
and orient? hadst not thou then the Spouses
kisse, and was not it precious and more worth
then a world? didst not thou then first hear the
soft language and whisperings of the spirit, and
was not his voice lovely and pleasant? I know
your souls dance within you, with the very re-
calling of so happy and golden a time, and you
pant and breath after more of this communion
with a Saviour, and truly he deserves an *Ana-
thema*, that does not prefer the very possibility
of having of it before all the world. *Hosea* 11.
8. *When Israel was a Child, then I loved him; I
taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their
arms, יְדַגְדְּרֵם; I taught him to foot it on the
wayes of Religion, יְדַגְדְּרֵם; I drew them
with the cords of a man, all gentle and persuasive*
sol-

solicitations, with bands of love, I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. The yoke of bondage the soul was under, God freed the soul, brought him to an easie pleasant yoke. God has a special care of tender plants; when *Israel* was a tender vine, O then he fenced it, and hedged it, and shone out upon it, &c.

Now Christ is thus pleased to reveal his love, to unbosom himself unto the souls of young Converts, for their greater encouragement in the wayes of grace: At the first step to heaven, he gives them a *viaticum*. If after the soul had been steeped in legal humiliation, and possessed with fears and terrours, and amazements compassed with Clouds, and now at last it has been drawn by a mighty work to receive a Saviour; If after all this it should have no Sun-shine, it would droop and languish, and be ready to pine away; it would be very unfit and unserviceable, the wheels of the soul would move heavily: God therefore oils the wheels, poures the *Oil of gladness* into the soul. And now it moves like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, with a nimble spontaneity. Christ begins to flourish through the Latrises, lets in some of his love into the soul; and gives it a sense of this love too, and this constrains it to obedience, & sets the soul a longing

for more of this love, and for more sence of this love; & so it will never leave longing, til it have a full fruition of it in heaven: this is Gods method, this is the usual progress of grace in the soul.

And hence you may see why young Converts are usually so active in the wayes of Religion, so forward and vehement. O, they have fresh apprehensions of the love of a Saviour; what an eminent alteration he hath wrought in them, how they are raised from death to life? O, they can tell you long stories of his goodness, what great things he hath done for their soul. So that their affections are raised: there is a flush of joy the soul runs over, and knowes no banks, no bounds. Thus God does many times seal up the work of grace in the soul, and gives a satisfying light at the first conversion: but yet I cannot say that this is alwayes so, for there are diversities of workings, and grace sometimes wrought in the soul after a more still and undiscernable manner; as we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

2. Sacrament-times, are sealing times. I speak of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; for as for those secret breathings of the spirit upon Infants in that other Sacrament of Baptisme, they are altogether unsearchable, and past finding out. Now in the Lords Supper you have the new

Covenant sealed up unto the soul; the soul has not only his graces increased, but they are printed clearer; that seal of the spirits does print a Christians evidences with a clearer stamp. You have plain and visible representations of the love of a Saviour; and you have the sense of this love powred out into you. A Christian feeds not only upon sacramental bread, but upon *hidden Manna* too, & has tastes of that love that is sweeter then wine. *Here's a feast of fat things; The soul is satisfied as with marrow & sweetnesse;* spiritual refreshments like fat things, they are sweet, and they are filling too; yet not like the fat things that have cloying fulsomness in them; no, these carry a delicious relish with them, such as the soul takes present complacency in them, and has a longing appetite for them. The soul never nauseates the feast of fat things; but the more it feeds upon them, the more it hungers after them. Now the two grand ends of this Sacrament in reference to a Christian, are 1. Growth of Grace. 2. Sense of Grace. 'Tis a Sacrament of Augmentation by which a new-born-infant-soul may grow up to its just proportion and full stature in Jesus Christ; and 'tis a Sacrament evidencing this condition to the soul. Christians come hither *ad corroborandum Titulum;* the *smoking flax* comes hither to have some light, and the *bruised Reed* comes hither to have some strength;

the worm *Jacob* crawles into the presence of a Saviour, and is sent away with an encouraging voice, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*. Many a tender babe in Christ, has stretcht out his weak and trembling hand, to lay hold of a Saviour, and has found vertue coming out from him. Many a thirsty soul has come breathing and panting after the streams of water; it has opened his mouth wide, & he has filled it. The longing & affectionate soul has come with vehement and enlarged desires, & has found full expressions & manifestations of his love towards her. Many a cloudy soul has come hither to see if he could spie out one beam, & has bin sent away brighter then the Sun in all its glory. You that come hither with the most ample and capacious souls; tell us whether you be not filled up to the brim, whether your cup don't overflow? O what heavenly intercourse is there between you and a Saviour? what pleasant aspects? what mutual love-glances? what smiles and blandishments? Do not you finde in your own souls, a full Paraphrase upon the book of the *Canticles*, that book of Loves? He comes with an earthy and drossie soul, that is not raised and advanced with such glorious mysteries.

And yet my meaning is not, as if every true Christian that had received this Sacrament, must needs have assurance; No, we know

1. Belcevers themselves may receive unworthily, as the Christian *Corinthians*, (when *Paul* tells them) they came together for the worse, and not for the better, he speaks it of such as were truly in the state of grace. Thus he concludes his discourse, *You are chastened of the Lord, that you might not be condemned with the world.* And thus the soul may go from a Sacrament with lesse comfort then it brought thither.

2. Many that have much joy and sweetness from a Sacrament, real and spiritual joy, I and strength and vigour too, yet it may be have it not in so great a proportion, in so high a measure; their cup is not so brim full, as that it should reach to assurance. All that do truly partake of these heavenly delicacies, yet don't go away equally satisfied. Some have but a taste which is enough to cherish them, others a full draught which doth mightily enliven them. So then, all we say is this, those Christians that have assurance, have it usual at these times, and some Christians that have wanted assurance, yet here have found it, which should strongly engage all to come hither with great and solemn preparation, quickening and exciting their graces, improving all present strength, breathing and longing after these pleasant streams, widening and enlarging their affections, opening their mouths like a dry and

thirsty Land that waits for some satisfying showers, and would fain be filled.

3. Times of employment are sealing times. When God intends a Christian for great and eminent service, he first makes his goodnesse passe before him, he sheds some of his love into his heart, which doth both constrain him to obedience, and encourage him in it ; his smile makes the soul go chearfully about his work, his presence gives life and vigour to a performance. The servants of God wait on him, fix their eyes upon him, look whether he gives them a propitious glance, they walk in the light of his countenance, they follow the direction of his eye, they won't move unless he breath on them. Moses won't stir without assurance of his presence. All the clusters of *Canaan* shall not entice him, he had rather dwell with briars and thorns in the wilderness, with the good will of him that dwells in the bush : He had rather be in a barren, and desolate and howling wilderness : then in a pleasant and fruitful Land, in a delicious Land without the presence of his God. He knows there is no sweetness in *Canaan* without him ; there is more sting then honey in the Land of Promise, unless he be there ; and *Canaan* it self will prove a wilderness if he withdraw himself. The beams of his gracious Presence, these gild a place : they can turn a desert

sert into a Paradise, and can make a prison glorious. The love of God in Christ it is attractive and magnetical, and drawes the soul along when it is once toucht with it, this will draw *Moses* to the Land of Promise, this will carry him through all difficulties. God sheds some of this love into *Moses* his heart, and then he goes on with chearfulnesse and alacrity. And so it was with his successour *Joshua*. God calls him to an honourable imployment, to be the Shepherd of his little flock, to guide and govern his people *Israel*. Now how does he prepare him for so great a work? why, he strengthens him, and heartens him with a promise of himself, with assurance of his love: *Fear not, but be of courage, I am with thee*: Thou hast my presence, thou shalt have my blessing, I have done much for thee, and I will do more for thee; be faithful in my service, and be couragious, and do not doubt of the love of God towards thee. Thus God when he called *Abraham* to that great expression of obedience in the sacrificing of his *Isaac*, he first warms his heart with his love, and seals up the Covenant of grace to him: he spreads before him ample and comprehensive Promises, *I am thy God All-sufficient, I am thy Buckler, and thine exceeding great reward*; and this will bear up and support *Abraham*, though

the staffe of his old age be taken away, and by his own hands cast into the fire.

And this was his usual dealing with the Prophets, when he sent them with great and weighty messages. He first reveals his goodness to them, before he reveals his minde by them, he assures them of directing mercy, of protecting mercy that shall bear them company, that shall go along with them : and this puts a generous undauntedness upon them, that they fear not the frowns of men, nor the threatnings of men, nor of the greatest of men: this makes *Jeremy* to set his face like a flint, and *Esay* to lift up his voice like a *Trumpet*, to tell *Israel* their sins, and *Judah* their transgressions.

And this is that which prepares the Martyrs for their sufferings. God tempers and allayes that Cup, he drops some of his goodness into it, and sweetens it to them. He first sets his seal to their souls, before they set their seal to his truth ; he diets them with the hidden Manna, and gives them before-hand the *White Stone*, as a sure pledge of victory. What is it but this that makes them devoure torments, and come to them with an appetite? 'tis this that softens the flames, and turns them into a bed of *Roses*; 'tis this that fills their souls with joy, and their mouths with praises : that makes them more chearful in their sufferings, then their Saviour in his ; for they usually

usually have the face of a reconciled God shining out upon them, which was wholly withdrawn from him, when he cryed out, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

4. Praying times are sealing times. The same Spirit that indites the Prayer, seals it up. When *Hannah* had put up her Prayer, *1 Sam. 1. 18.* the text sayes expresly, that *her countenance was no more sad.* As 'tis the great priviledge of assurance, That Christians may then with confidence cry *Abba Father*: so also 'tis a great means to Assurance. The hearing of prayers is a mighty strengthening to faith; and the strengthening of faith does strongly tend to assurance. Besides, Christians may pray for assurance; they may be importunate for a glimpse of his face, for one beam, for one smile, and his bowels won't let him deny them. Hence you shall finde it, that such as are most frequent in Prayer, are most blest with assurance. Praying Christians have much intercourse and communion with their God. And thus there may be a national kinde of assurance, I say a national plerophory; when God shall poure out a spirit of prayer and supplication upon his people, and they with united and concentrated abilities shall besiege the Throne of grace; there is no doubt, there can be no doubt

doubt, but at length he will yield up such a mercy to his praying People.

5. Times of outward exigencies are sealing times, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed dayly*; that feeds upon hidden Mannah, a precious restorative for a fainting Christian: Manna you know was rained down in the wilderness; and when the Israelites provision failed them, then Manna was rained down. When the water-pots are filled up to the brim, then was the water presently turned into wine: and so this hidden Mannah is provided for sad and cloudy conditions. We except only the case of total desertion, when the soul has not the least light shining in upon it, which is the severest judgement that a true Christian is capable of: but in other distresses, especially outward and temporal distresses, he does reveal himself more immediately to them. And though the creature frown, yet he will smile upon them. Believers they are the friends of God, and 'tis no part of friendship to forsake them in the saddest times. St. John, when a banisht man in the Isle of *Patmos*, then God shewes him that glorious *Revelation*. Paul and Silas, when in prison, then brim-full of joy, which breaks out into Psalms of praise. In the fiery trial, as there is some scorching, so there is some light too.

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And God does prepare his people for the seal of the spirit, by thus melting and softening their heart; for the softer the heart is, the clearer will the print of his love be. When God had brought that great sickness upon *Hezekiah*, and thus had dissolved and softened his heart, he presently prints his love upon it: חֲשַׁחַת מִשְׁאוֹל בְּפִשׁוֹ, *Thou hast loved my soul from the Grave*. God does then most expresse his love, when they have most need of it. The *white Stone* sparkles most oriently in the darkest condition. O how gloriously does God shine in upon the prisons of Martyrs? what frequent visits does he give them? it might even make men ambitious of their sufferings, that they might have some such expressions of his love towards them.

6. Times of Victory and Conquests over lusts and temptations are sealing times. God after such victories will give his people a triumph. This is exprest in that text of the *Revelation*, *Rev. 2. 17.* τῷ νικῶντι δέσω, *To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the bidden Mannah, &c.* Thus when Saint Paul was wrastring with, and conquering that great temptation, whatever it was, that is mentioned in *2 Corinthians 12*. God then gives to eat of the hidden Mannah, and strengthens him with this, *my grace is sufficient for thee*. He gives him the *white Stone* with that

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Motto graven in it, *my grace, &c.* Thus that noble Christian, and famous Convert of *Italy*, *Galeacius Caracciolus*, when he had scorned the pomp and lustre of the world, and had trampled upon all relations for the love of a Saviour: when Satan that cunning Angler of souls had spent all his baits upon him, and he had refused them all: O then what a deal of precious sweetness slides into his soul? what rushings in of glorious joy? he had never such joy at *Naples*, as he had at *Geneva*. You may hear him pronouncing an *Anathema* to all such, as shall prefer all the gold and silver in the world before one dayes sweet Communion with Jesus Christ. As none have more dregs of wrath then relapsing and apostatizing spirits, (Remember but *Spira's* case;) so none have sweeter and choicer mercy then the faithful Servants of the Lord Jesus, that follow him in the houre of temptation. Apostates are sealed up to a day of vengeance, but these are sealed up to a day of Redemption. Thus the mourners in *Ezekiel*, that would not yield to the abominations of the times, must have a seal set upon them. Thus that Virgin-Company in the *Revelation*, that would not prostitute their souls to Antichristian folly, have the seal of God in their foreheads. This is the happiness of a Christian, that he has a sweet satisfaction in self-denial;

al; in denying sin, in repulsing lust, in conquering temptation, in pulling out his right eye, in cutting off his right hand, in mortifying the body of death, he has a sweet satisfaction in all these. And thus you have seen those special sealing times when Christians have this high plerophory, these riches of assurance: we come now to speak of them in a more Applicatory way.

1. Times of assurance, they should be times of humility and dependance upon God. When *Moses* had been so long in the Mount, and had a lustre upon him by conversing with God himself, presently at the foot of the Mounr he meets with matter of humiliation. The *Israelites* have made them a golden Calfe; *Thy people*, sayes God to *Moses*, they have done this. And the Apostle *Paul*, when he had been rapt up into the third Heaven, and had heard there some of *Ar- cana Cæli*, things that neither could nor might be uttered; for both are implied in Ἀρρήτα ῥήματα there then comes a Messenger of Satan to buffet him, he must be put in minde of himself by a thorn in the flesh, and that least he should be exalted above measure with abundance of Revelations. A creature can't καταψέφαι μέλαν ὄλεον, a little thing will puffe up a bubble, a small happiness will swell up the Sons of men. Pride as it

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twines about the choicest graces, so it devours the sweetest comforts. But yet there is nothing tends more to the soul-abasement and self-exinanition, then the beholding of Gods face, then the seeing of his glory, this will make the soul abhorre it self in dust and ashes. The more God reveals himself unto the soul the more will the soul see that huge disproportion that is between it self and a Deity. There's none here below that ever saw more of *Gods* face then *Moses* and *Paul* had done, and there were none that ever had lower apprehensions of themselves. They knew well enough what the Sun-shine of his presence was, what a glorious sight it was to behold his face, and yet they had rather part with this, then he should part with his glory. They are like men amazed with the vastness and spaciousness of the Ocean, and make nothing of a little inconsiderable drop of Being. They that know not these treasures of love and sweetnesse, those heaps of excellencies that are stored up in *God*, these are the grand admirers of themselves. But when the soul comes to have a prospect of Heaven, and fixes its eye upon an object of the first magnitude the creature disappears, self vanishes and loses it self in the fulness of *God*. And if *God* do assure thee of this his love, thou canst not but wonder at the greatness of his goodness, especially

ally when thou shalt recollect thy self, and think upon thine own unworthiness. Thou that didst not deserve a beam of his face, what does he give thee a full Sun-shine? Thou that couldst not look for the least taste of his love, what does he give thee a whole cluster of *Canaan*? Thou that didst not deserve the least crumb of the hidden Mannah, does he fill thee an Omer full of it? Nay, yet higher; Thou that didst deserve a brand from his Justice, does he give thee a seal of his love? he might have given thee gall and vinegar to drink, and does he flow in upon thee with milk and hony? he might have given thee the first flashes of Hell, and does he give thee the first fruits of Heaven? what couldst thou have lookt for but an eternal frown, an ddest thou meet with so gracious a smile? O then fall down and adore his goodness, *and let all that is within thee blesse his holy name.* Tell me now, is there any ground for pride in such a soul? does not assurance bespeak humility; and speak meer dependance?

2. *Times of Assurance*, they should be times of trampling upon the creature, and scorning of things below. Dost thou now take care for corn, and wine, and oil, when God lifts up the light of his countenance upon thee? is this same Angels food, this same hidden Mannah,

it too light meat for thee ? Now thou art within the Land of promise, feeding upon the grapes and pomegranates of the Land, dost thou now long for the garlick and onions of *Egypt* ? Now thou art within thy Fathers house, and the fatted Calf is slain, wilt thou now still feed upon husks ? Art thou clothed with the Sun, and canst not thou trample the Moon under thy feet ? O let them scramble for the world that have nothing else to live on. Pray give room to the green Bay-trees to spread themselves abroad ; but don't thou lose thy fatnesse and sweetnesse to rule over these. Art thou sure of Heaven, and wouldst thou fix thy Tabernacle upon earth ? Is it good for thee to be here ? or would'st have any more then the light of Gods countenance ? is it not enough that thou art sure of happinesse ? is not a Fountain enough for thee ? why wilt thou drink in muddy streams ? and thou that art filled with the love of a Saviour, canst thou tell how to spend a thought upon the world ? is not there more beauty in a Christ then in a Creature ? is not he the fair'st of ten thousand ? away then with adulterous glances, for why shouldst thou embrace the bosom of a stranger ?

3. Times of assurance they should be times of watchfulnesse, and more accurate walking with God. To sin against revealed love is a deep

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and killing aggravation. To sin against light is too too much ; but to sin against love is a great deal more : this heightened *Solomons* Idolatry, (*1 Kings 11.9.*) that he turned from the God of *Israel* which had appeared to him twice. What wilt thou with *Jeshurun* wax fat and kick, and kick against bowels too ? To provoke God in a wilderness is not so much as to provoke him in a Paradise. What could he have done more for thee then he has done ? and what couldst thou have done more against him then thou hast done ? and wilt thou still requite him thus ? wilt thou provoke him with *Manna* in thy mouth ? Does he give thee the sweet clusters of the Land , and dost thou return him wilde grapes ? that which is the strongest engagement to obedience , dost thou make it an encouragement to sin ? art thou so willing to dash thy joy , to lose thy peace ? And O how will it please the powers of darkness to see thee abuse a beam ? The Devil has several designs against the welfare of a soul. First, if it were possible he would keep thee from any grace at all. But secondly, if he can't do that, he would keep thee from strength of grace, from growth in grace ; he would break the bruised Reed, he would quench the smoking flax. But then if he can't prevail here neither ; then in the third place , he would keep thee from sense of grace.

in a sad and cloudy condition : he envies thee one beam, one smile, one glance of his eye. But then if the riches of Gods goodness do so run over, as that he will give thee a sense of his love; then fourthly, in the last place, he would not have thee abuse his grace, and turn it into wantonness. But when God has planted thee in so happy a Paradise, don't thou listen to the whisperings of the Serpent. Thou that art sealed by the holy spirit, don't attend to a lying spirit. The devil that great plunderer of souls, would fain rob thee of thy Jewels, of thy joy and peace, and happinesse : but do thou hide them in a Christ, in the wounds of a Saviour; and take heed of blotting thine Evidences; thou that art a Child of light, be not ruled by a Prince of darknesse. If God give thee a sense of his love, walk more stedfastly, walk more accurately with thy God.

4. Times of assurance they should be times of inviting and encouraging others in the wayes of grace. Thus the Psalmist, when his Cup overflowes, he calls others to taste of it, *O taste and see how gracious God is*, that ye may trust in him. then thou mayest now bring a good report upon the third and of *Canaan*, thou mayest shew them the goodly fruits of the Land, that were cut down in the brook *Eshcol*. Men look upon Religion as

a rigid and austere thing, that comes to rob them of their joy, they must never have a smile more, they must never have a Summers day after it; but thou canst tell them of the sweetness and deliciousness that is in the wayes of grace, thou canst assure them that all the wayes of wisdom are pleasantness; thou canst satisfie them, that grace does not mean to take away their joy, but only to refine it, that it does not mean to put out the light, but only to snuffe it, that it may burn brighter and clearer. There is no such joy to be found in the wayes of sin, there is no such joy to be extracted from the Creature; no, the sweetest and purest honey 'tis sucked from a flower of Paradise. Spiritual joy 'tis the most clarified joy; I, and 'tis solid and massy joy, beaten joy, like beaten gold, Ἀληθινή καὶ σφυρήλατος, χαρὰ. I, and 'tis lasting and durable joy. All the Creatures make but a blaze, but the least spark of this 'tis immortal. Can there be sweeter Sabbatisme of spirit? can there be happier composednesse of soul, then to be provided for eternitie; to be sure of heaven, happinesse and glory; to have the revealing Gods love, the displaying of himself, the beaming out of his face? is not the least appearance of his love more worth then a world? are not the gleanings of spirituals better then the v

tage of temporals? me thinks an assured Christian, like a *Caleb* or a *Joshua*, should be able and ready to confute all the false intelligence of the spies; and to answer the weak objections that they bring against the Land of Promise. Awake O sluggard, and arise, there is no Lion in the way, or if it be, it has honey in it: There are no Sons of *Anak*, or if there be, before *Israel* even these mountains shall become a Plain.

5. Times of assurance they should be times of store, *'Ouk an' dices ior'au.* Now treasure up beams, heap up light, store up hidden Mannah. To be sure, this Mannah won't breed worms. Then thou mayest confidently applaud thy self, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many yeares.* Happy thou, if this night thy soul be taken from thee. Storing up of former evidences, is a good provision against a cloudy day.

6. Times of assurance should be times of breathing after full possession. The espoused soul should long for the Nuptials, for the full consummation of its joy: and by a heavenly gradation it should ascend in its thoughts. Is there such sweetnesse in one cluster of *Canaan*, what shall there be in the full vintage? is there such pleasantness in a prospect of the Land upon the top of Mount *Pisgah*, what happiness shall there be in enjoyment of the Land? is there such glo-

ry in a beam of Gods face? what shall there be in an eternal Sun-shine? is there such a sparkling lustre in the *White Stone*, what then shall there be in all those Pearls that garnish the foundations, and make up the gates of the new *Jerusalem*? is there so much in the preface of glory, what shall there be in the enlargements and amplifications of it? is there so much in the *Ænigma*, what is there in the explication? can you see so much beauty in happin^ssse, when her Mask is on, how glorious then will she appear when she is unveiled? does the soul sing so sweetly in a Cage of Clay, what melody, think you, shall it then make when 'tis let loose to all eternity?

We now come to winde up all in a word of application.

Now the more pure and delicious a truth is, the more do the men of the world disrelish it: the more bright and shining it is, the more offensive to their eyes. The more orient the Pearl, the more do they trample upon it. Evangelical discoveries meet with the fiercest oppositions. The Serpent will be sure to winde into Paradise, and the seed of the Serpent ever knew how to still venomous and malignant consequences, out of sweet and flowery truths. 'Tis the Devils work to imprison all truth, but the nobler and more precious truths must be sure to be put

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in the lowest and darkest Dungeons. As here now, Assurance of salvation, 'tis the very Crown and joy of a Christian; the *Flos lactis*, the Cream of that Ἀδολον γάλα, that is to nourish souls: 'tis the budding and blossoming of happiness, the antedating of Heaven, the prepossession of glory; 'tis the very Pinnacle of the Temple, the πτερυγιον; how fain would he throwe Christians from thence? how would he blast glory in the bud? how fain would he pull down the Suburbs of the new *Jerusalem*? how would he stop all the fresh springs that are in these? how would he seal up the luscious influences of the *Pleiades*? how fain would he *Lycurgus*-like, cut up all the vines of *Canaan*, that no spy might ever bring one Cluster of the Land of Promise? He himself must feed upon nothing but dust, and how does he envy them their hidden Manna? That Son of the morning is now bound in chains of darkness, and how does he envy them their light and liberty? how fain would he cloud and eclipse their Sun, and stop it in its race? nay, set it ten degrees backward? How does he envy them one beam of *Gods* face, a grape of *Canaan*, one smile, one glance of *Gods* eye? Now he could finde out no fitter instrument to rob Christians of their joy, then Antichrist that grand enemy of the Church, that spiritual *Nero*,

that Tyrant of souls, that vice-*Beelzebub*, that Prince of darkness that rules in the Children of disobedience. He rules them, and yet they are Children of disobedience for all that. This *Beastian* Empire, (for so 'tis stiled in the *Revelation*;) delights only in sensuall, and strikes at spirituall. It strikes at the vitall of Religion, at the power and essence of godliness. Here are the men that must cry down Assurance under the names of presumption, security, an heap of *Enthusiasmes*, as if this hidden Manna would breed all these worms. If men do but dip in the Honey-combe, and take some of these voluntary drops that sweat from it freely, of their own accord, as *Saul* told *Jonathan*, they must certainly die for it. O this were a way to open their eyes, as it did *Jonathans*. They are loath to let men taste and see how gracious God is, lest they might trust in him.

There are therefore two things which I shall here endeavor by way of Application.

First, to give you a brief discovery of those grounds that necessitate the adversaries of this truth to deny assurance.

Secondly, to take off that vain and frivolous cavil, that assurance is a Principle of *Libertinisme*, and that if men be once assured of their salvation, they may then do what they list.

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And first for the grounds that make them deny assurance. And though I might here shew at large, that all Popery, the Quintessence of it is extracted out of guesse and conjectures, their whole Religion is but a bundle of uncertainties, a rude heap of contingencies, built upon the thoughts of others, upon the intentions of a Priest; yet I shall let that passe now, and give you these four considerations that prevail with them to deny assurance.

1. They lay too much streffe upon good works. Now assurance is too goodly a structure to be built upon such a foundation. They part stakes between grace and merit, and so leave the soul in a tottering condition. There is so much pride bound up in the spirits of men, as that they are loath to depend upon another for their happiness, they would have an innate and domestick happiness within themselves. But alas, self-bottomings are weak and uncertain, and they that build upon their own good meanings, and their good wishes, and good resolutions, upon their good endeavours and good works, when they have done all, they have built but the house of the Spider. These that spin salvation out of their own bowels; their hope 'tis but as a Spiders web. And there are many that neither thus spin nor toil; and yet I say unto you, that

a Pharisee in all his glory is not clothed like one of these. If men do but enquire and look a little to the ebbings and flowings of their own spirits, to the waxing and waining of their own performances: surely they will presently acknowledge that they can't fetch a Plerophory out of these. Beleeve it, the soul can't anchor upon a wave, or upon its own fluctuating motions. So that 'tis a piece of ingenuity in them, to tell men, that whilest they build upon the sand, they can have no great security that their house will last long: they may safely say of the Spider, that it can have no certainty that its house shall stand. Whilest they lean upon a Reed wee'l allow them to question whether it won't break or no; nay, if they please, they may very well question whether it won't pierce them through. They can be sure of nothing unless they be sure of ruine. Assurance cannot be founded in a bubble, in a creature, for the very essence of a creature is doubtful and wavering, it must be built upon an immutable Entity, upon the free love of God in Christ, upon his royal word and oath, the sure expressions of his minde and love, upon the witness of the Holy Ghost, the seal of God himself. Here the soul may rest, and lean, and quiet it self, for with God there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. The creature is all shadow

dow and vanity, 'tis *filia noctis*; like *Jonah's* gourd, man may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon decays and dies. All its certainty is in dependance upon its God. A creature, if like a single drop left to it self, it spends and wasts it self presently: but if like a drop in the fountain and Ocean of Being, it has abundance of security. No safety to the soul, but in the arms of a Christ, in the embraces of a Saviour. No rest to a Dove-like spirit, but in the Ark of the Covenant, and there's the pot of hidden Manna. You know that dying *Bellarmino* was fain to acknowledge, that the nearest way to assurance, was only to rest upon the free grace of God in Christ. And they that cry down duties so much, if they would mean no more then this, that men must not trust in them, nor make Christs of them, nor Saviours of them, (as they use to express it) wee'l easily grant them this, if they'l be content with it.

2. They take away that clasping and closing power of faith it self, by which it should sweetly and strongly embrace its own object. They would have the soul embrace clouds, and dwell in generals; they resolve all the sweetness and preciousness of the Gospel, either into this Universal, *Whosoever beleeves shall be saved*: or else, which is all one, into this conditional, *If*

thou

thou beleevest thou shalt be saved. Now this is so far from assurance, as that the Devils themselves do thus believe and yet tremble. The thirsty soul may know that there is a Fountain; but it must not presume to know that ever it shall taste of it. The wounded soul (with them) may take notice that there is balm in *Gilead*, but it must only give a guesse, that it shall be healed. They won't allow the soul to break the shell of a promise, so as to come to the kernel. They silence faith, when it would speak its own Idiom, *My Lord, and my God*. O what miserable comforters are these: How can they ever speak one word upon the wheels, one seasonable word to a weary soul; when as all they can reach to, by their own acknowledgement, is to leave the soul hovering betwixt heaven and hell? And as they say in matter of reproof, *Generalia non pungunt*: so 'tis as true in matter of comfort, *Generalia non m'elcent*. Yet to see how abundantly unreasonable these men are; for in the matter of their Church, there they require a particular appropriating faith, a monopolizing faith, that the Church of *Rome* is the only true visible Church: and this is no presumption with them. Thus they can imbrace a dull error, and let go a precious truth. But the true Church of Christ, as 'tis it self built upon a Rock; so every member

ber of the Church has the same security. And the soul with a spouse-like affection, does not only conjecture who is her well-beloved, but is in his very arms, and breaks out into that expression of love and union; *I am my well-beloveds, and my well-beloved is mine.* But how strangely does their conjectural certainty take away the sweetness of such Relations? Christians with them must only conjecture that they are the Sons of God, the spouse must only guess at her beloved Husband; the sheep must hope that this is the Shepherds voice. O how do they emasculate and enervate Religion! how do they dispirit it, and cut the very sinews of the power of godliness! But all you that would finde rest to your souls, must know, that you can never apply a Christ too much that you can never appropriate a Saviour enough, that whole happiness is in union with him.

3. They deny perseverance, and so long may very well deny assurance. And yet the *Arminians* have an art of reconciling assurance, and non-perseverance. They allow men a little brief assurance for one moment, a *breve fulgur*, a little coruscation of joy, that onely shewes it self that it may vanish and disappear. The summe of their meaning amounts to thus much: For that moment that thou art in the
state

state of grace, thou mayest be sure on't, but thou canst not be sure that the next moment thou shalt be in the state of grace. As if a Christian were only a Ball of fortune to be tost up and down, at her pleasure. And indeed they make grace as voluble and uncertain, as ever the Hea-then did fortune. And if they would speak out, grace with them is *Res vitrea, quæ dum splendet frangitur*. And *vasa gloriæ* with them are little better then *vasa fictilia*: they can dash them in pieces like a Potters vessel. And then make no more of it then *Epiçtetus* at the breaking of a Pitcher. *Ἐστὶ ἐν γενομένῳ, 'tis but a usual thing; Hodie vidi fragilem frangi*. Vain men that think the grace of God as mutable and unconstant as they themselves are, that can remove men from Heaven to Hell as often as they please, that with a daring Pen can blot names out of the book of life, and reverse the seal of Heaven when they list. This must needs strike at the root of assurance, and leave the soul in such sad doubts as these. 'Tis true, I am now feeding upon the milk and honey of the Land of *Canaan*; but I may return to the wilderness again, to the bondage of *Egypt* again. 'Tis true, I am now a Temple of the holy Ghost; but how soon may I become a prison, a dungeon, the receptacle of every unclean spirit? What though I be now a vessel of honour

honour, how soon may I become a vessel of wrath? and though I be for the present in the loving hand of a Saviour, yet I may be to morrow in the unmerciful paw of the Lion. Pray tell us now, has the soul any great security all this while? are the friends of God no surer of his love then thus? 'Tis happy for Christians, that 'tis not in the power of these men; no, nor of all the powers of darknesse, to put a period to their joy; no not to put the least comma or interruption to it. No, they may as soon dethrone the Majesty of Heaven it self, they may as soon pluck the Crown from his head, and wrest the golden Scepter out of his hand: nay, they may as soon pluck out the Apple of his eye, they may as soon annihilate a Deity, as pull thee out of his hands, as rob him of one of his Jewels. Thou art kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. We can't close up this better then with that heavenly invocation, those triumphant expressions of the Apostle Paul: *For I am perswaded, that neither life, nor death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor height, nor depth, &c.*

4. They never had any assurance themselves, and so they would willingly deny it to others. There is so much pride and envy in the spirits of men, as that they are very loath, that others should

should have more happiness, or be more sensible of happiness than themselves. They do here *Calamum in Corde tingere*; they tell you what they finde in their own hearts, nothing but conjectures and shiverings, and tremblings; nothing but slavish doubts and feares. But the voice of assurance, 'tis a still voice, the spirit speaks; Ἀγὼγὴ ἔχων, κεραλήν, ἵνα μὴ πυθῶμαι' οἱ ἄλλοι. That soul only hears it, to which it speaks. The sparklings of the *White Stone* are secret and undiscernable to a carnal eye: No man knowes it, but he that has it. 'Tis *Manna κεκερυμμένον*; not the visible and obvious Manna that was rained down by the tents of the *Israelites*, but that that was reserved and laid up in *Urna aurea*. Spiritual tastes and relishes, spiritual experiences, they are wholly unexpressible, they are altogether unimitable. There are two things which the most refined and accomplisht Hypocrite cann't possibly reach unto. 1. He cann't express the life and power of a Christian. 2. He cann't express the joy of a Christian. As no man can paint the Being of a thing, so no man can paint the sweetness of a thing. Who ever could paint the sweetness of the Honey-combe? the sweetness of a cluster of *Canaan*? the fragrancy of the *Rose of Sharon*? the sweet voice of a Lute? Ζῶγραφοῦ τῆς μαρτυρίας καὶ τῆς μόνης, &c. The Painters eye steals a little

little beauty from the face; and perhaps his hand makes restitution, restoring it again in the picture, and that's all you can expect of him; nay, 'tis well if he perform so much: As for the expression of vitals, or the representation of essentials, 'tis *Ultra Penecillum*, so that he must let this alone for ever. Believe it, sincerity can't be painted. The joy of the holy Ghost can't be painted. 'Tis easier painting of faces than of hearts. Men in an unregenerate condition, can't know what assurance is, till their hearts be changed, or unless they could read the hearts of Gods people. Men will deny the most certain and unquestionable things, if they themselves have no experience of them. Upon this account many a fool has said in his heart, *There is no God*; because he had no communion with him, he did not attend upon him. Thus others deny that there is any such sweetness in the wayes of God, because they were never acquainted with them.

In Musick, what though there be never such variety of graces, such inarticulate elegancies, such soft and silken touches, such quick stings and pleasant relishes, such musical amplifications and flourishes, such nimble transitions and delicious closes; you'l scarce convince a deaf man of all this, till you can give him his hearing. Or

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suppose

suppose a blind man should obstinately deny that there were a Sun; truly I can't tell how you could well convince him, unless you could give him an eye, or else perswade him that he is defective in somewhat which others have. To speak of assurance, and the voice of the spirit to some, is but to speak Riddles and Paradoxes. Here I have told you much of light, and beams, and Glory; I had as good told some of you, of Clouds, and shadows, and darkness. I have spoke much to you of the fruits and clusters of *Canaan*; had I not as good have set before some of you briars and thorns, would you not have had as much sweetness in them? I never promised to shew you the *Manna*; for I told you 'twas hidden: yet we have told you the things which we have seen and known, and what we have tasted of the Word of Life; and that which I doubt not, but many of you can set your seals unto.

We come now to take off that vain and frivolous Cavil, that assurance is a principle of Libertinisme; that the Apples which the Spouse longs for in the *Canticles*, will breed too much winde; that hidden Manna will breed worms, that those flaggons full of wine, which the Spouse would so fain be comforted withall, will fume up too much into the head. O, say they,
if

if men be once assured of their salvation, they may then do what they list. But

1. God won't put *new wine into old bottles*. God never prints his love upon the heart, till the heart be renewed and prepared with Evangelical meltings; and the same Seal that prints his In a ge too. A flinty heart won't take the seal of the Spirit. The sparkling *White Stone* is never given till the heart of stone be taken away. The new name is not given, till the new creature be framed. God will not distil one silver drop of such precious sweetness upon the soul, till it be enclosed for his own Garden. And though the outward Sun-shine with liberal and undistinguishing beams, shines both upon the good and the bad, upon the Rose and the Nettle; yet the light of Gods countenance beams out only upon the Apples of his own eye: the Sun-shine of his gracious presence, glides only the vessels of Honour, and puts a lustre upon none but his own Jewels. And though the pourings forth of ordinary goodness fall upon a wilderness sometimes, as well as on a Paradise; yet these more choice and luscious influences of heaven, slide only into the hearts of Gods peculiar ones. Beleeve it, thy soul must first become an Ark of the Covenant, before thou shalt ever have a Pot of hidden Manna in it.

'Tis true, that if God should thus display his goodness, and seal up his love to the soul, whilst it were still in an unregenerate condition, whilst it did still hanker after its lusts and corruptions, it would then indeed sport it self more securely in this Sun-shine of mercy, and turn this grace of God into wantonness. Thus men of sordid and ignoble spirits, will trespass more upon a friend; then upon an enemy; an injury will keep them in better order then a courtesie. Thus nettles will sting most violently, when they are handled most gently. Thus the wretched *Indians* adore the Devil, because he is their enemy, and neglect the Majesty of heaven, because 'tis so propitious. When God shines out upon ungrateful dunghills they return him nothing but venomous and malignant evaporations. We'll easily acknowledge, that if these men should have the *White Stone*, they would trample upon it: For you see how they deal with ordinary mercy, which the bounty of heaven heaps upon their heads.

There are such Pleonasmes of love in God, such runnings over of goodness, as that much falls upon these. God breaks the box of common mercies, and fills the whole world with the favour of it. But what tribute and Revenues of glory has he from them for all this? Why, they violate

violate his Lawes, and profane his name, and fight against him with his own weapons, *Ἀργυρεῖς λογχαίαι*, with his most precious mercies, gifts and parts, and all they have shall oppose him that gave them. Of their Jewels they make a golden Calf. Do you think now that God will trust these with his more special mercies? with his *viscera* and tender mercies? He tryed the Vessel with water, and 'twon't hold that. Do you think he will poure wine into it? No, God reveals his love to none but to his friends; he sets his seal to none, but to such whom he sets as a seal upon his heart and on his arm; such as have an happy conformity to him, and a full compliance with him; such as have the same interests, and the same glorious ends with himself; such as delight in his Law, and feed upon his precepts, as upon an honey-combe. Do you think he mayn't trust these with his minde, such as have a plain antipathy against sin, against the very picture and appearance of sin; such as prefer Hell it self before it; such as loath it, even as himself loaths it; men that are ready to pluck out their right eyes for him, to cut off their right hands for him? Do you think he mayn't manifest his love to these? What sayes the Apostle *Jehn*? *he that is born of God cannot sin*; 'tis a plain impossibility that he should so far put off his filial affection, as to make it his

work to displease him : much lesse can he take so strong an advantage of his goodness, as therefore to provoke him, because he knowes that God loves him. These men only tell us what they would do if they had assurance ; but truly they are not like to have it, till their hearts be changed, and then they'l be of another minde.

2. Love is a sweeter and surer and stronger principle of obedience then fear. So that God did infatuate the counsel of that *Achitophel*, *Machiavel* I mean, when he stilled that venom into the hearts of Princes, that they had better rule their subjects with a Rod of Iron, then with a Scepter of Gold ; that they had better enslave them by fear, then engage them by love. The truth is, he had given them such Rules, that he kn w if they followed them, they could not possibly be loved ; and therefore he would fain persuade them, that 'tis better to be feared. And though this may seem to adde some sparklings to Majesty, and to brighten the Crown of Sovereignty ; yet it leaves it far more tottering, more unfixt and unstled upon their heads. There is such a virulency mixt with fear : such a tincture of hatred in it ; both these affections are much of a colour, sad and pale. And therefore that Tyrant was so wise yet as to expect hatred ; *Oderint dum metuant*, sayes he, he knew whilest they feared

feared him, that they would hate him; And then there is a reluctancy and Aversion in fear; And those workings upon the soul, that come only from terrors, they usually prove abortive. And what though a body be pulled and haled and scared into obedience? the soul is not conquered with all this. A slave does but watch an opportunity for shaking off the yoke. And then there is a depressing and disabling power in fear, it contracts and freezes up the motions of the soul; it clips the wings, it takes off the wheels, it unbends the bowe. Trembling and Paralytick motions are weak and languishing. Indeed fear 'tis nothing but *Præcox tristitia*, a crude and indigested kinde of sorrow; and 'tis the sower, because it is not ripe. And therefore God himself that is a most absolute Monarch, and has a boundless & infinite supremacy over all things; yet has far more glory from them that love him, and only passive obedience from them that fear him. Indeed he never goes about to rule any by fear, but those that have first trampled upon love, and are no longer subjects, but profest Rebels. 'Tis love that glews and fastens the whole Creation together. Those seeds of love which God himself, (who is love) has scattered amongst Beings; those sparks of love which God himself, (who is love,) has stamp't upon Beings,

maintain the whole fabrick of the world in its just beauty and proportion. The harmonious composure of Beings, the tuning of the several strings, makes them sound out his praise more melodiously. O how comely is it to see the sweet context and coherence of Beings, the loving connexion and concatenation of causes: one being espoused to another in faithfulness and truth; the mutual clasplings and twinings, the *due benevolence* of entities. Behold, *how goodly a thing it is*, and pleasant to behold Beings, *like Brethren to dwell together in unity*: It calls to minde those precious drops of love, that fall from the head of the first Being, and fell down upon the skirts of inferior entities. And is not there as much of this love to be seen in the new Creation, in the work of grace in the soul? Is not the foundation of the second Temple laid in love? is not the top and pinnacle of it set up by a hand of love? Are not the polishings and carvings of it the works and expressions of love? the witty inventions of love? Is not the structure maintained and repaired at the constant expences of love? Is it not inhabited by a Prince of love? one more loving then *Solomon* is there; nay, what is the whole Gospel else, but *אשכול הקפר*, a *cluster of Redemption*, as some render it; what is it else but a bundle of love?

The Law that was an hammer to break hearts; but the Gospel that's a key to open hearts. And truly all the terrours of Mount *Sina*, the Thunder-claps and the lightning flashes, the Earth-quakes and the smoaking of the Mountain, and the voice of the Trumpet, have not so much power and prevalency in them, as one still drop that falls from Mount *Sion*. You are now come to the Mount of Olives, a Mount of Peace and sweetness, a Mount that drops fatness, and in this Mount will Christ be seen. And he comes to restore all things to their primitive love: he restores the powers and faculties of the soul to their first and original concord; he knits his gifts and graces in the bond of love: he comes to reconcile Beings, to make antipathies kisse each other. The Wolf and the Lamb must be at peace, the Leopard and the Kid must lie down together. The whole Gospel like the midst of *Solomons* bed in the *Canticles*, רשק אהנה, 'tis *pav'd with love*. Now sure you can't question whether this be the more prevailing way. For, O think but a while, what a potent oratory there is in love, what a welcome tyranny, what a filken bondage, what a downy and soft necessity. Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou Lady and Queen of Affections! thou art the first-born of the soul, and the beginning of its strength.

Who

Who would not be captivated by so sweet a Conqueror? Who would not be melted in so delicate a flame? What heart would not entertain so pleasant an arrow? The *Psalmist* was struck through with one of thy darts, when he panted so after the streams of water. The *Apostle Paul* had another of thy arrowes sticking fast in him, when he cryed out, *The love of Christ constrains me, Vulnus alit venis, & Sacro carpitur igne.* Believe it, the strongest arguments are fetcht out of Loves Topicks. We need not use many perswasions to such a soul, it has a fountain of Rhetorick within. There is a present expansion and amplification of spirit for the welcoming of so happy an object. O how will such a soul twine about a Precept, suck sweetness out of a Command, catch at an opportunity, long for a duty! How does it go like a Bee from flower to flower, from duty to duty, from Ordinance to Ordinance, and extract the very spirits and quintessence of all, *δράττω κορυφάς*, crop the very tops of all. There will be in such a soul, the constant returnings and reboundings of love. 'Twill retort the beams of heaven, 'twil send back the stream of its affection into the Ocean. So that now as the soul is assured of the love of God, so God also has a most absolute certainty that the soul will *'Αντισπινδι*. And thus is compleated the sweet
and

and perfect circle of Love. Now there cannot be a more strong and a more mutual security, then that which is thus founded. And therefore nature chooses to maintain her self by these impressions. We see this plainly in filial and conjugal relations, where the sweetest and surest obedience flowes from principles of love. And where is there more certainty then amongst friends; where there is a borrowing & lending of souls, a mutual exchange and transmigration of souls? Now you know all these Relations are clarified and refined in grace; you are the friends of God; nay, you are the Sons of God, you are the spouse of Christ. And the Apostle *John*, that speaks so much of assurance, and tells you that a Christian can't sin; consider but a while who he was? Why, he was the Beloved Disciple? he that lay in the bosom of love, and breathed out nothing but pure love. I, and his reason, 'tis founded in a relation of love, *He cannot sin because he is born of God*. He resolves it into the *σώζουσα μένη*, that same impression of love that abides in him.

3. Consult a while with your own experience and observation, and then tell us whether ever you knew any to walk more accurately with their God, then such as were assured of his love. If you look up to heaven, there you see glorious Angels, and glorified Saints, that have not only

a full assurance, but a full possession of the love of their God: that are no longer taking a prospect of *Canaan*, but are now feeding upon the fruits and clusters of the land of Promise: that have not only some scattered and broken beams of glory, but a constant and an eternal Sun-shine. And O how do they *ἀγαλλιάδου ἐν θεῷ πάντες*, not *οὐκ ὡς* only, but *ἐκ τῶν αἰώνων*. They have not only as we here below, some drops and sprinklings of happiness; but they are at the very Fountain, and have fresh bubblings of joy, full streamings out of sweetness, and can swim in the Rivers of pleasure. Surely these men will allow the Angels somewhat more than only to conjecture that they are happy. What must glorified Saints still dispute about their *Summum Bonum*, lest they be too secure; and must Angels only be of opinion, that they are in heaven? must they only guesse at the face of God? What will they clip the wings of the Cherubims too? Where has God more chearful obedience then from these? How joyfully do these ministring spirits run about their glorious errands? how does he bid one, *Go, and he goes, & another, come, and he comes*. And that which sets a fair glosse upon happiness it self is this, that they are out of all possibility of displeasing their God. And so they are held forth as patterns of obedience; *They will be done in earth as 'tis in heaven.* Well,

Well, but then if they tell us that there is more danger of frail men that dwell in houses of clay, and carry the body of death about with them.

1. We must bid them entertain honourable thoughts of the excellent ones of the earth : for though it be true that they are not yet *ἰσάγγελοι*, yet *God has made them little lower then the Angels, and he has crowned them with glory and honour.* They walk with little Coronets upon their heads : Though the most massy and brightest Crown be reserved for a day of Inauguration. They now feed upon Angels food. God steeps them in his own nature, and in his own love, he gradually prepares them for heaven. They are Inceptors for happiness, they are Probationers for glory.

2. What though there be some unworthy dealings with their God, yet these flow only from those reliques of slavish principles that remain in them, some fragments of the old Leaven that was not thoroughly purged out. And not by vertue of a Gospel Plerophory. What does the knowing that they are Sons of light, does this dispose them to works of darkness? Does the knowing that they are the spouse of Christ, does this bespeak adulterous glances? 'Tis true, the Sons of God may provoke him, but must they there-

therefore do it under this very notion, because they know they are his Sons? nay, must they do it the more for this? This were the extreamest malice that were imaginable; more malice then the Devils themselves are capable of. What bold blasphemy then is this against the Sons of God, and against the sealing spirit. I, and it involves a flat contradiction too, it puts an *esse* and a *non esse simul*; because they know they are friends, therefore they'l deal like enemies; and because they know their Sons, therefore they'l deal like slaves. O what fine repugnancies are these? Thus would they not only veil and cloud, but also spot and deface so beautiful a truth; but that it shines out with such victorious and triumphant beams. But if any can yet doubt, whether assurance do advance obedience, let them but a while compare men assured of their salvation: 1. With others in the state of grace that want assurance, or with themselves when once without it: And then let them tell us, whether they don't differ as much as a bruised Reed, and a stately Cedar in *Lebanon*? The doubting Christian does but smoke, when the assured Christian flames. What faintings and shiverings and paleness in the one? what vigour and liveliness, what a ruddy complexion of soul in the other? How is the one left to the pleasure of a wave, when

when as the other lies safe at anchor. The one can scarce lift up his weak and trembling hands in prayer, when the other is wrestling with Omnipotency. The one comes behind and touches the hem of his Fathers Garments, when as the other is in his very arms and embraces. The one dares scarce touch a promise, scarce cast an eye upon a promise; when as the other claims it, and grasps it, and appropriates it. The performances of the one are green and crude, and unconcocted; the others are ripened, and mellowed with a stronger Sun-beam of Love. The one like a Lute with his strings loose and languishing; the other is tuned up to its just height of affection. The one like a Bowe bent, sends forth his Arrows very vigorously; the other does but drop them, and let them fall. How does Satan wound the one with many fiery dart, that the other quenches! How does the one fear the roaring of the Lyon, which the others trample under his feet! 2. If you should compare them with men in an unregenerate condition; O what *ἀβυσσὸς χάσμα*, what a vast gulf is there between them? Sure you don't question, whether God has more service from *Israelites* that feed upon Garlick and Onions? Men that are under the damning and domineering power of lusts, and are only kept a little in awe, by some thunderings

ings from Mount *Sinai*: Though they spend a few sighs sometimes, and drop a few teares sometimes; yet when they are thus waſht, how ſoon do they return to the wallowing in the mire? The chaining of a Wolf, does that meeken and ſoften him? or the putting a hook into *Leviathan*, does that transform him? Though wicked men by fears and terrors have their bounds ſet them, like the Sea, which they cannot paſſe; Yet they are ſtill like the raging Sea, they ſwell and foam, and caſt out their mire and dirt. And who more wicked then they that are desperate? Thoſe black and damned Potentates of hell, becauſe they are out of all poſſibility of mercy; how do they act *ad extremum virium* in all expreſſions of malice and wickedneſſe? And therefore God out of his infinite goodneſſe, though he does uſually ſeal men up to life and happineſſe, and lets them make their Calling and Election ſure; yet he does ſcarce ever, or very rarely ſeal men up to ruine, ſo as to let them know certainly that they are Reprobates: for this would make them deſperate; there would be no living with them in the world. Or if he does ſhew them this, he does withall let them run into ſome act of violence, that preſently frees the world from them. That hope which wicked men have of being ſaved,
though

though it be groundlesse, yet it keeps them within their bounds and compass. Though it be but like the Spiders web; yet the very spinning of that web, keeps them in the mean while from a full expression of their venom. And that same shadow of obedience which God has from Hypocrites, 'tis founded in some shadow of hope that they please themselves in: and when this hope of their own framing vanishes and deceives them, then they back-slide and apostatize.

4. Are there not other judgments enough to waken them out of a sinful security? are there not Rods? are there not Scorpions? is there nothing but present disinheriting? Sure you cannot but remember that famous place where God speaks to *David*, and points at *Solomon*, *Psal. 89. 32, 33. If his Children break my statutes, &c.* God will make his own people know that 'tis a bitter thing to depart from him, and to forsake their first love. Nay, this is most certain, that wicked men themselves are not capable of such severe temporal judgements as the Sons of God are. That which is here done to the green Tree, cannot be done to the dry. For

1. They may fall from assurance. Though they can't lose the seed & the root of grace, yet they may lose the flourishing and fragrancy of

it. Though the foundation of God remain sure, yet they may fall from their top and eminency. Though they be built upon a Rock, yet they may be dashed with waves. Though the Seal of God be of an eternal efficacy, yet they may deface the Print and sculpture of it, so as that it may not be visible to their eye. Now what a sad alteration will this be? Thou must not look for any more stroakings, for any more smiles, for love-glances any more. Thou must bid thy fountains of joy farewell. Thou must not look to see thy spouse flourishing through the Lattices any more. Thou must expect Clouds and shadows, and veils, and curtains, and walls of separation. The fig-tree of *Canaan* shall not blossom, and there shall be no fruit in the Vines, and the labor of the Olive shall fail. Thou must passe many a day without one Sun-beam; God will seal up his sweetest influences, he will shut up the windows of heaven, & stop the bottles of heaven; he will rain down no more Manna upon thee. Go to thy husks, and see if they'll feed thee. Nay

2. They may not only fall from assurance, but even in a total desertion look upon God as an enemy, and instead of a filial Plerophory, may come to a fearful expectation of the fiercest wrath of God. Now this I say is more judgement then wicked men are capable of here; in
this

this respect that they never had his love once revealed to them : whereas these are thrown down from the very pinnacle of the Temple. And God does not only eclipse the lustre of their former joy ; but dips his pen in gall, and writes bitter things against them. He was wont to shoot nothing but the fiery darts of Love ; I, but now his envenomed arrows stick fast in them. They did once surfeit of the Grapes and Clusters of *Canaan* ; but now he hedges them in with briers and thorns. They were wont to taste of a Cup of sweetness, a cup of love ; but he has now prepared for them a cup of trembling and astonishment. They had once a spring-time, a budding, a blossoming-time, the dew of heaven dropt on them, the beams of heaven visited them : But now comes a sad and disconsolate Autumne, a fading and withering time. Their gloss and greenness is gone ; Heaven reveals it self in thundering and lightning flashes against them, so as they shall even envy green Bay-trees, then men of the world that are free from all this. Now is not this enough to keep a soul in awe ? The *Psalmist* was very near this which we speak of ; he often tells you, that his joy was put out, that his peace was gone, that he was even ground to powder, that he was banisht from the face of his God ; that he was excommunicated from

that happy and heavenly intercourse with God, which once he had. These are frequent complaints; and yet he was one

1. Of a pleasant and chearful temper. The Scripture paints him out as one of a sanguine complexion, the men of the world would have said he had been melancholy else. He was one that was like a green Olive-tree in the house of his God; a most flourishing and fruitful Christian. As if he had been one of the Church triumphant, he was always singing fresh *Hallelujahs*. He had a soft and delicate touch upon the Harp, he could still *Sauls* evil spirit with his musick; I, but he could not thus tune and compose his own troubled and distempered spirit. He was fain now to hang his Harp upon the willows; and the voice of his Lute was turned into sighing. And if he does sing sometimes with a thorn at his breast, 'tis some penitential Psalm or other.

2. And yet all this while he was a King upon a Throne, he wanted not the pomp and bravery of the world. I, but a Scepter won't conquer fears, and a Crown of gold will not cure an aking head, much lesse an aking heart. The smiles of the world they brought him to all this, and therefore he can't take much complacency in them; for when he does so often envy the men of the world, and is ready to stumble at the prosperity of the wicked; it was not

not so much for the outward things of the world which they enjoyed, for those he had himself too in a plentiful measure; but it was for the quietness of their spirits, they were calm and serene, if compared with him, not in such fears and doubts as he now was: they had not such conflicts, and Paroxysmes, and tumultuations of soul as he now had. And yet he was one that once had the face of God shining out upon him. And therefore he desires him to *restore the joy of his salvation*: *Lucem reddere, abes jam nimium diu*; *Instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus affulsit, populo gratior it dies & soles melius nitent*, as he once spake to *Augustus*.

So that you see here are wayes enough to keep men from a carnal security. And thus we have took off that bold calumny, so as we hope that, *Nihil adhærebit*.

Having laid open at large the nature of assurance; we now come to handle briefly the second observation; And that is

Observ. 2. Christian Assurance requires and calls for diligence. Sure I need not tell you, that the most precious things are Cabinetted and lockt up under difficulties. If you look to nature, you see how she reserves her Jewels in secret repositories; she sets them in her own bosom, and enhances their price by rarity. *There*

is indeed, *a vein for silver*, as *Job* speaks; but nature is not so profuse to open it, to let it run waste, and exhaust her self. She hides her Treasures, and puts them out of the reach of an ordinary Plunderer.

Or, if you look to Arts: There are indeed some things which float at the top, *ἑστῶτες ἐπὶ τῆς ὕδατος*, those that are but initiated into them, are presently acquainted with them; Hence some beginners, when they have but tasted these, think they have a present kinde of omniscience. O but stay a while, there are most mysterious things, which lurk at the bottom, and require a profounder search: they must dive deep before they fetch up these Pearls. Thus 'tis in Languages, the choicest elegancies many times are coucht in Idioms, those *arcana linguarum*, you may see them like so many Pearls glittering amongst the rubbish of the Tower of Babel. Thus 'tis in civil affairs, some things are visible and obvious to a vulgar eye: the rude heap and masse of people can take notice of them: some wheels move so plainly, as that they can see them. I, but there are more secret springs of motion, more intimate contrivances, politick riddles, which they only can read that are *a secretioribus*. Every design must not have a window in it, 'tis comely sometimes to see *Moses* with

with a veil upon his face.

And thus 'tis in the wise Oeconomy and dispensation of the Gospel. 'Tis true, the whole Gospel is pregnant with heavenly mysteries: 'tis like that heavenly γαλαξία, the milky way, which the wise ones of the world take for a Meteor only, a brief φαινόμενον; I, but those that are enlightened from above, know that 'tis made up *ex flore lucis*, 'tis compounded of Starres lesse discernable; and even here *one Star differs from another in glory*. There are *myst ria primæ magnitudinis*, such transcendent and dazling mysteries, as that the Eagle must be fain to shut her eye; and the Seraphim must be glad to wink. And there are not only intellectual, but practical depths in the way of Religion: And Christian Plerophory is one of these. For a soul to be filled with the breathings of the spirit; And to move with full sail in the Ocean of Gods love; And when it pleases to lie safe at anchor; I, and to be sure of coming safe to the haven, certainly the soul must needs cry out all the while " *Salve*, O the depth of the goodnesse and love of God! how mysterious are his wayes, how are his mercies past finding out!

1. Now for a Christian to arrive to so full a sense of Gods love, *hic labor, hoc opus est*:

It requires diligence; For

1. There are but few that have any right and

Interest in the love of God in Christ, at all.

2. Of those few that have a share and portion in his love, yet all of them have not assurance of his love. There are but few that enter into the Temple; I, but there is only some *Aaron* that enters into the *sanctum sanctorum*, and casts his Anchor within the Veil And

First, there are but few upon whom God bestoweth his love. 'Twas alwayes a principle in Morality, that sweet and intimate friendship cannot be extended to many. Friends usually go by paires. Now God, though he be of vast and boundless love, and has love enough to satisfie a multitude of worlds, yet he has chose to concentricate it all in a few pickt out of the world: that he might thus engage them the more to himself. His large and precious love is kept for his only spouse.

Secondly, of those few whom he loves, some are not assured of his love. He loved them all from everlasting, yet none of them could be then assured of his love. A non-entity cannot reach to a Plerophory. Well, but when they precept out of their first nothing, truly they were not any rare objects of love: much lesse could they then be assured of the love of their *God*; when they were in a state of enmity and opposition, and the Children of wrath as well as others: Well, but when

when he put them into a state of love, and made them lovely with that beauty and comeliness, with those Jewels and bracelets, which he had put upon them : when he loved them as his new Creatures, as his vessels of honour, that were now cast into their just mold and fashion: When he loved them, as his new-born Sons : yet these babes in Christ could not presently cry *Abba Father*. They were his Epistle, written in a goodly character, dated from eternity, folded up and kept secret, at length sent into the world : the superscription was writ in time, in Vocation: Will, but all this while they were not sealed, till the spirit comes and stamps a clear impression of Gods love upon their soft and melted spirits. 'Tis true, they were sealed as soon as they were written in Gods eternal Decree, but they were not visibly sealed till now. Now what pantings and breathings? What longings and intreaties? what preparations were there in the soul, before it could obtain this?

Secondly, it requires diligence to keep assurance. O take heed of wasting and crumbling away thy hidden Manna. God may break the staffe of bread, and what will thy weary soul do then? Take heed of losing the white Stone, take heed of forgetting thy new name. O maintain the Oil of gladness in the Cuse. Thou that
art

art a Vine of *Canaan* laden with generous fruit; wouldst thou willingly part with thy sweetness, and fruitfulness? Thou that art a green Olive-Tree flourishing in the house of thy God; wouldst thou be content to part with thy fatness, and pleasantness? Thou wert wont to stay and anchor thy soul upon thy God; And wouldst thou now be left to the courtesie of a wave? What? Art thou in love with the tents of *Kedar*? They are black indeed; And dost thou think them comely too? Art thou weary of the Sun-shine? And wouldst thou cool thy self in the shade? Dost thou begin to loath thy hidden Manna, and wouldst thou return to the Garlick and Onions of *Egypt*? Art thou cloyed with the clusters of *Canaan*, and dost thou nauseate the Honey-comb? O remember, thou didst not so soon obtain assurance, and wilt thou so soon lose it?

Thirdly, give diligence to recover assurance, if lost: O when will the winter be past? when will the rain be over and gone? that the flowers may appear, and the time of singing may come: That the Vines of *Canaan* may flourish again, that the tender Grapes may appear. *Awake O South-winde, and with thy gentle breathings, blow upon the Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out!* Never leave till thou findest thy spouse again, thou that art sick of love: Tell him that
thou

thou longest for a cluster of *Canaan*; That thou art even famished for want of hidden Manna. Desire a new edition of his love, with all the enlargements of affections. Lay thine heart before him, and desire new stamps and impressions; tell him that though thou hast lost the print, yet he has not lost the seal; tell him that thou wilt now prize his love more than thou ever didst or could'st do before. Give him no rest, till he give thy soul rest, and fill it with himself. Surely thou wouldst not willingly set in a Cloud: thou wouldst not go out of the world with thine Evidences blotted and blurred: Surely thou wouldst not willingly be tost and dasht with waves in sight of the haven. Hadst thou not rather go to thy grave in peace? O desire him to shine out upon thee a little before thou goest hence, and be no more seen.

2. Now surely, we need not tell you, why assurance does thus require diligence, For

1. You know the hearts deceitfulness, how it loves to please it self in a shadow, in a painted joy, to flatter it self into an imaginary happiness. Most men in the world are so confident of heaven, as if they had been born heirs apparent to the Crown of glory: as if this new name had been given them at their baptism, or as if they had been born with hidden Manna in their mouths;

months. They never knew what a question or a scruple was, nay they wonder that others trouble themselves with them; as for them, they have a connate kind of Plerophory. These *fabri fortune sue*, have a key to heaven of their own making, and can go to it when they please. These crown themselves with their own sparks, and think them more glittering and precious then the White Stone. As if they were *Custodes sigilli*, they can seal themselves to the day of redemption when they please. Thus do vain men cheat their own souls: when as 'twere their wiser way, rather to commune with their own spirits, to criticize upon their own hearts, to see what a false print they are of, what false glosses there be, what *varie lectiones*? what corruptions and degenerations from the Original? whether there be any spiritual Idioms? what are the genuine works of the spirit? what are spurious and supposititious?

2. Give diligence, because thou hast a diligent enemy that would so fain quench thy joy, and keep it from flaming into assurance. He envied the grain of Mustard-seed, when 'twas first sown: how then does it vex him to see it now spread into such goodly branches, that the soul can build its nest there? He envied thee the first blushes of the day, the buddings of the Rose morn-

morning ; that those fair and virgineye-lids should open and glance their light upon thee : now then is he scorcht with thy fuller Sunshine ? How do his eyes water at thy noon-day brightness ? He that would have broke thee when thou wert a bruised Reed, how would he triumph in thy fall, now thou art a stately Cedar ? If he could, he would have dispirited and took up the vigour of that immortal seed, by which thou wert born again ; He would faine have spit his venom into that sincere milk, which fed thy infant-soul ; how then does he envy thee those flagons of wine, with which thou art now quickened and enflamed ? He would faine have hindered the foundation of the second Temple, and now he would faine demolish the structure, and down with it even to the ground.

That son of the morning fell himself not only from a compleat assurance, but from a possession of glory ; and that into the most extreme darkness that was imaginable, into a total impossibility of ever being happy ; and now he would vey faine (as much as he can) involve others in the same condition : But certainly it does adde much of hell to him, in that he perceives that the sons of God are now fixt in an immutable condition ; whereas he was left in so voluble a state, so that now all that he can possibly do is this, to damp

damp their joy for the present, to raise Clouds, and storms, and tempests; And in this that Prince of the air does his endeavor to the utmost. And yet Christians may frustrate him here too, and by a strong and clasping hand of faith, may lay such fast hold of a God in Christ, as that they may even make the Devil give over : and to all his former, may adde this new despair of ever eclipsing their glory, and may send him away as weary as he would be, if he should go about to interrupt the joy of a glorified Saint, or of one of those Angels that still dwell in glory. So that the more frequent his Alarms are, the more should Christians stand upon their watch, the more should they fortifie themselves, and look to their spiritual Panoply : they should flie to the name of the Lord, which is a strong Tower.

3. Give diligence, because 'tis in a matter of so great consequence : and to be deceived here will prove the most stinging aggravation of misery that can be. The house that was built upon the sand, great was the fall of it. There is a counterfeit Plerophory, a blazing kinde of assurance, a bragging kinde of confidence, you know the name of it, 'tis called Presumption, that great devourer of souls, that uses to slay it ten thousands ; 'Tis so far from being an Anchor as that 'tis but a swelling and impostumated

wave, which tosses up the soul a while, that it
 may sink the deeper. And can there be a greater
 Emphasis of misery then this? Thou tookest it
 for granted, that thou wert in the ready way to
 heaven, and now thou art dropping into hell ir-
 recoverably: Thou expected'st no lesse then a
 Crown of glory, but canst finde nothing but
 chains of darkness and a gnawing worm. How
 golden was thy dream of happiness? didst thou
 not fancy the light and beams of heaven ripen-
 ing the fruits of *Canaan* for thee? did'st not
 thou think thy self upon the top of Mount *Pi-*
rah, refresht with soft and delicate breathings,
 taking a full prospect of the beautiful Land of
 promise? Nay, didst not thou think that some
 of the milk and honey of the Land flowed into
 thy mouth? That thou wett plucking off green
 apples from the Trees? Nay, that thou hadst the
 very tastes and relishes of the Olives and Figs,
 and Pomegranates, and Grapes in thy mouth?
 but behold, thou wakest, and art in a wilder-
 ness, amongst Briars and Thorns, amongst fiery
 serpents, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no
 sweetness is! Thou tookest that for the whisper-
 ing of the Spirit, which was but the hissing of
 the Serpent. Thou thought'st thy self in the ve-
 ry Suburbs of the new *Jerusalem*, in the Temple,
 the *sanctum sanctorum*; when as thou wert all
 this

this while but in an *Egypt*, in a *Babylon*, in a prison, in a Dungeon. Thou didst exalt thy self like the Eagle, and build thy nest in the Stars: But with what indignation wert thou swept from thence? *How thou art fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*

3. Consider what kinde of diligence is required. And

1. Be diligent in *self-reflexion*. A clean heart chews the Cud, & ruminates upon its own actions: Give thy heart frequent visits, and see whether it keeps that print which the sealing spirit stampt upon it, read over thine evidences; if there be the least blot, wash it out. Try thy graces by a Scripture Sun-beam. Hast thou within a continual feast? Why then dost not thou invite thy thoughts thither, that they may be satisfied as with marrow and fatness? Why dost not thou compel them to come in? Let them drink sweetness out of their own Fountain, let them bless the womb that bare them, and the breast that gave them suck.

Let them be afraid of entring into their hearts, that have no quietness within, unless like the *Leviathan* they can sport themselves in a raging Sea, that foams out mire and dirt. But thou canst steep and bathe thy thoughts in a Calm and composed spirit. Why dost not thou liste

to thine ovvn musick? Why dost not thou glance upon thine ovvn beauty? Assurance consists in a reflex act, and by such vworkings 'tis maintained, *iisdem alitur, quibus gignitur.*

2. Be diligent in Prayer. Beleeve it, assurance does not come vvith those vweak vvishes and velleities, that are so frequent in the mouths of many, O that we were sure of heaven, of happiness! O that our souls were well provided for! O that we knew what should become of them to eternity! Truly these are but gaping and yawning desires, as if hidden Manna would drop into their mouths. This great blessing requires a wrestling prayer. The White Stone is given to none but a Conquerour. The spirit won't set his seal to a faint and languishing velleity: An Echo won't answer a whisperer; a weak voice is not worth a rebound.

The truth is, there is a great deal of Vicinity and friendship, nay I think I might say Consanguinity, between Assurance and Prayer. Prayer should be *Plerophoria quædam explicata*. Assurance does mightily enliven and animate Prayer, and Prayer does *ἀντιπαρῆς*, cherish and maintain Assurance.

Go then unto thy God, and be importunate with him: beg a smile, a glance, a beam of his face: desire him to take all worldly things a-

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gain,

gain, unless he will sweeten them with his love. Tell him, thou canst no longer feed upon husks, and desire him to give thee somewhat that's fit for a soul to live on.

3. Be diligent and frequent in communion with thy God. Converting with God puts a lustre and radiancy upon the soul; descending to the Creature, puts a Veil upon that former brightness; sweet and familiar intercourse with thy God, puts thee into the number of his friends; and friendship brings assurance and confidence along with it.

Would God (dost thou think?) admit thee into his most shining and beautiful presence? would he thus display himself to thee, and make known his most secret treasures of goodness and sweetness unto thy soul, unless he loved thee? would thy Saviour thus smile upon thee? would he thus unbosom and unbowel himself to thee? would he thus flourish in at the lattices, unless he were thy spouse? would he thus kisse thee with the kisses of his mouth? would he tell thee so much of his minde, unless his heart were with thee? would he accept of thy prayers and thy performances, thy spiritual sacrifices, if he meant to destroy thee? didst thou ever know him deal thus deceitfully with any? would he give thy soul such frequent visits, such gentle breathings?

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would he so often whisper to thee, that which the world must not hear, if thou wert an enemy as well as they? canst thou think thy self in darkness, when the Sun looks upon thee? Canst thou doubt of quenching thy thirst, when the fountain bubbles out, and flowes upon thee? Canst thou doubt of liberty in the yeere of *Jubilee*? What is the Dove in the Ark, and yet can it finde no rest to the soale of her feet? Canst thou question thy safety under the wings of Christ? No, whatever it was that put out thy joy, it did first estrange and alienate thee from thy God. And couldst thou but recover thy former nearness to him, thou need'st not doubt of the same affectionate expressions from him. Communion with God, 'tis that which gives an heavenly and eternal Plerophory; 'tis that which maintains the assurance of glorious Angels, & glorified Saints. And that which takes away all hope from the damned is this, that they are perpetually banisht, irrecoverably excommunicated from the face of their God: *Depart from me, I know you not*: there is more in that then in fire and brimstone. But God has said unto thee, *Seek my face*, and let thy soul echo out its resolution, *Thy face Lord, will I seek*: for all certainty flowes from God, from that fixt and unshaken Entity, from that Original immutability that is in him. And when God sets his seal unto thee, he prints somewhat

Of this upon thee : And therefore the more God gives of himself to thee, the more Assurance he gives thee.

Go then to the place where his honour dwells, go to the place where his glory shines. You know that the Apostle *Thomas*, when he was absent from the Apostles meeting, he fell into a strange distrust of that which the others were very well assured of. Go then to those Ordinances, that drop golden Oil upon the soul, and make its countenance to shine. Hide thy self in those clefts of the Rock, that God may make his goodness passe before thee. God will there beam out upon thy soul, he will warm it with his love, and will then seal it to the day of redemption.

Observ. 3. Christian Assurance deserves diligence. 'Tis a miserable thing to toile for vanity and emptiness ; to sowe the winde, and to reap the whirlwinde. But to take pains for happiness, who would not be willing to this ? An Israelite that would be loath to spend his time in gathering stubble, would willingly spend it in gathering Grapes. A wise Virgin will chearfully put in so much Oil, as will make the Lamp to shine. The soul will never be weary of gathering hidden Manna. Assurance is a very satisfactory thing ; men take a present

sent and compleat acquiescence in it.

I. Consider it in Temporals, what won't worldlings do to secure their Lands, and Goods, and Estates? How do they seek for Bonds, and Seals, and Oaths and Sureties; and yet think all this too little? They have set up an Ensurers Office, and will scarce venture a Ship at Sea, unless it can have an unquestionable Plerophory; unless one will secure it from warres; and another from Rocks; and a third from windes and tempests. And this is one of those stings and vexations which God has put into temporals, that they are uncertain. Many a worldling has pined away under this very notion, that his riches had wings, and could flie away when they list. And this was the reason, why the Epicures were all for enjoying the present moment; because that was all they were certain of; and therefore they would have devoured and swoopt up the quintessence of all happiness in a τὸ νῦν if they could. Thus *Anacreon* sings τὸ σήμερον μέδω μοι, τὰς αὔριον τίς οἶδε. And this was that which made the Heathen so angry with fortune, a goddess of their own framing, because she put them alwayes upon blind uncertainties. This made the Stoicks to run into the other extreme; to fix themselves in an unevitable certainty, in a sullen necessity, to anchor upon fate, rather then to be

left to a wavering contingency.

2. Assurance in Intellectuals is very satisfactory. There's nothing that tortures the soul more than scruples and difficulties; it makes it to dwell like a Lilly among thorns.

The Scepticks were a perpetual wrack to themselves. Objections flie like dust into the souls eye, and sometimes 'tis fain to weep them out. How does it vex the Naturalist that his head is so non-plust, as that he must flie to the refuge of an occult quality? How impatient was *Aristotle*, what boylings and tossings in his breast more then in *Euripus*, because he could not give a full account of the ebbing and flowing of that river? He threw himself into it, as if he thought to finde more rest there then in his own spirit, discomposed only with this uncertainty. Every question cheeks the understanding, and makes it remove a little from certainty, as the learned *Verulam* observes. Every question 'tis some grace to errour, and some repulse to truth.

But how sweetly does the minde relish those first and common notions, that carry a native light, and convincing evidence and certainty in them, and won't give the soul leave to doubt? and how does it bathe it self in those crySTALLINE streamings out, those pure derivations of secondary notions, that freely bubble out from these
foun-

fountain-principles, which for their certainty sometimes are honoured with the name of axioms? And some give this rule for a trial and touchstone of notions: Whatsoever proposition the minde does fully close with, that is unquestionably true, because the minde can't rest satisfied but with certainty. And that which it gives but an hovering and imperfect assent to, is but probably true. Now though sometimes a falsity may come under the fair disguise of an apparent certainty, yet this is also sure, that the minde cannot so fully and sweetly acquiesce in an apparent certainty, as in a real certainty. As neither can the will so fully close with an apparent good, as with a real good; for in realities there is a sure Entity at the bottom, which is a just foundation for appearance, whereas the other is a meer colour, a surface, a shadow. And the more perfect any intellectual being is, the more of certainty it has.

Our knowledge therefore here is but cloudy and enigmatical, shadowy and in a glasse. The nearer to God any being is, the more it has of certainty. And therefore the Angels and Spirits that see God face to face, are satisfied with his Image. Truth then plucks off her veil, pulls off her mask, that the soul may salute her. And this is the great Prerogative of that infinite and su-

pream Being, God himself, that he has an independant and eternal certainty, and beholds all beings and motions of being past, present, and to come, without the least shadow of variation. And those things which pose created beings, are more plain and obvious to his eye, then first principles are to ours. The very intimate forms of beings are naked and anatomized before him. He looks down upon the Sons of men, and sees them rolling and fluctuating, tost and tumbled up and down in uncertainties, sometimes even questioning him in his wayes and his dealings, while as he rests in a full and absolute Omniscience. And this is his great goodness, that he allows us certainty in those things that concern our welfare and happiness.

3. In spirituals and eternals, assurance is very satisfactory. Religion should be above syllogismes and disputings. Spiritual notions should have the seal of God in their foreheads; they are not to be struck like sparks out of a flint: but are to spring like light from the Sun; they are to flow like streams from the Ocean. And Principles of Religion must be built upon a Rock, upon the most sure and unquestionable grounds that can be. Men that build for eternity, had need to lay the foundation sure, and they must build gold and precious stones upon the foundation,

tion, that which has a solidity, and a firm certainty in it. And if this were observed,

1. You would not have such jarres and divisions in the Church. You would not be so much troubled with the noyse of Axes and Hammers. Imposing things questionable as certain, is agreeable to that spirit, which allows no other assurance but this; that their Church is the true Church.

2. The mixing and blending of Religion with uncertainties, is that which does emasculate, and dispirit, and endanger it; 'tis a dashing the wine with water; 'tis an adulterating the gold with drosse, so as it won't endure the fiery Triall.

3. The taking up Religion upon uncertain grounds, does put men upon an odious lukewarmness and neutrality; for men can't be zealous for a thing they doubt of. It puts them upon variableness and unconstancy, upon the very brim of Apostasie; and (it may be) plunges them into it. Nay, it strongly tends to Atheism. Some do so long question, which is the true Religion, as that at length they resolve to have none at all.

4. The leaving the success of Religion uncertain, does damp and cool the spirits of men. The learned moralists amongst the Heathen, could never content themselves with a fair proba-

bability only of *summum bonum*, but did spin it out to an imaginary certainty. The Stoicks would have a domestick Plerophory, they must be unavoidably happy : A meer certainty won't suffice them, it must be condens'd into a necessity. A wise man with them must irreversibly seal up himself to happiness : And so though he were in *Phalaris* his Bull, he must glory and triumph and sing Hallelujahs. But the fairer Moralists, were willing to depend more upon the bounty of heaven, which yet they lookt upon as a sure and unquestionable thing ; nay, they pleased themselves not only in a Plerophory, but in a present possession. For you know vertue with them was *Præcox beatitudo*, as grace with us is glory not fully ripe. And serenity of natural conscience was their hidden Manna ; their white Stone. Thus were they fain to still their souls in some shadows and appearances of certainty. This sweetned *Socrates* his Cicute, and made him a chearful Martyr for Philosophy.

And all wicked men that go on merrily and securely in their wayes, do frame some imaginary certainty to themselves ; which (it may be) they found upon sure principles, but falsely applyed ; as this, *That God is merciful*, or the like.

All this I bring to shew that the soul does
catch

catch at certainty and assurance, and will rest satisfied with nothing else. For, for men to apprehend themselves uncertain of happiness, what is it else but to be for the present miserable? Nay, would not some (do you think) choose rather to be certain of a tolerable misery, than to be in continual suspense of happiness? And truly such men as have no assurance of obtaining this great end of their being, they are of all Creatures most miserable.

The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, and shall not the Sons of men have where to lay their heads? Every being loves certainty: How do Naturals combine together and unite their forces, that they may secure themselves by an happy association? Nature will have a Plerophory, won't admit of a *vacuum*, the least schisme and rupture would prove fatal, and put it upon uncertainties. Sir *Francis Bacon* spies this in those fallings down of water, that thred and spin themselves into such slender stillicids, that thus they may preserve their continuity, and when they can reach no longer so, then they fall in as plump and round a figure as they can.

And if every Being loves assurance, then surely such a noble Being as the soul of man, cannot be satiated with a changeable good; it can't fix it self upon a moveable centre. Immortality is
neer

neer a kin to immutability. Besides, if it were only this, that the soul did doubt of happiness, it were a lighter burden; but there is necessarily conjoynd with this a fear of extreamest misery. Now for a soul to be perpetually hovering betwixt heaven and hell; nay, to have far more ground to fear the one, then to hope for the other, and so to tremble at the very thoughts of eternity; is not this a piece of the gnawing worm? & must the soul live in this perpetual slavery? Is there no redemption from it? Did not Christ come to take away this sting amongst the rest? Did not he come to draw thee to himself, to quiet thee in his own bosom? Return thee to thy rest, O my soul! Return to thine Ark, O my Dove! And look upon this Gospel-Plerophory, as one of those great priviledges that were purchased for thee by a Saviour. For 1. By this, thy soul, thy darling, 'tis fully provided for, for eternity. Thy lot is fallne to thee in a fair ground, and thou hast a goodly heritage; could thy soul open its mouth any wider? could thy soul desire any more then this, to be sure of being for ever compleatly happy? What would the damned in hell give for a possibility of happiness? What would some wounded spirits give for good hopes and probabilities? when as thou in the mean time hast an overflowing Plerophory.

ry. What would the one give for a drop to cool their tongue? What would the other give for a pure stream to wash their bleeding souls? When as thou all the while art bathing in the Fountain, art sailing in the Ocean, art swimming in the Rivers of pleasure. Thine understanding may well rest satisfied, for 'tis sure to fix its eye upon an eternal beauty; upon the face of its God. Thy will may rest it self in the embraces of its dearest object: for 'tis espoused to the fairest good, and is sure to enjoy it with an indissoluble union. Thy purer and more refined affections may sport themselves in the Sun-beams of heaven. There may thy love warm and melt it self, and there may thy joy dance and exult. All that thou hast to do here below, is this; Thy Virgin-soul that is here assured and contracted, must wait a while for the Nuptials, for a full fruition of its God, for a full consummation of its joy.

2. This must needs sweeten all present conditions to thee. Eat then thy bread with joy; and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God accepts thy person, and smells a sweet odour in thy sacrifice. Are there any pearls in the Gospel? thou may'st lay claim to them. Is there any balm in *Gilead*? thou hast a share in it. Are there any Gospel-priviledges? thou knowest they

they are thine, and are intended for thee. Does God bestow temporals upon thee? thou knowest that he first dips them in love and sweetness. Mount *Gerizim* is thy portion: And how art thou above waves when as some are shipwrackt, others are tossed and disquieted; thou hast an happy protection in all thy wayes.

1. Thou art secure against the frowns of the world, for heaven smiles upon thee. Thou may'st laugh at the false judging and esteems of men. It may be, the world brands; I, but the spirit seals. It may be the seed of the Serpent hisses; I, but the holy Ghost breaths. What, though thou beest fourty years in a Wilder nesse? Nay, what though thou beest seventy years in *Babylon*? Won't *Canaan*, and won't the new *Jerusalem* make amends for all?

2. Thou art secure in times of judgement. As *Job* speaks of the *Leviathan*, The sword of him that layes at him cannot hold, the speare, the dart, nor the habergeon. The arrow cannot make him flee, darts are counted as stubble; he laughs at the shaking of the spear. Who is like him upon the earth, one that is made without fear? When God thunders upon the men of the world, he speaks but in a still voice to thee; he darts lightening flashes in their faces; but he
lifts

lifts up the light of his countenance upon thee. Judgements are intended for the sweeping away of Spiders webs, not for the sweeping away of Gods own Jewels. Or if they be envolved in a common calamity, yet how is it rolled up in sweetness to them? when as the other can taste nothing but gall and wormwood. Their body may be tossed a little in the world, but their soul lies safe at Anchor.

3. In the houre of death. Thou knowest that providence then, means only to break the shell, that it may have the kernel. Let them tremble at the knockings and approaches of death, that know not what shall become of their precious souls: Men who through the fear of death, have been all their life-time subject unto bondage? But thou may'st safely trample upon the Adder, and play in the Cockatrices Den. The Martyrs (you know) did thus, when they embraced the flames, and complemented with Lions, and devoured torments, and came to them with an appetite. Assurance of the love of God in Christ, this and nothing but this pulls out the sting of death. 'Tis true, that death has lost its sting in respect of all that are in Christ; but yet such as know not that they are in Christ, fear death still as if it had a sting: Only an assured Christian
tri-

triumphs over it; *O death, where is thy sting?*

4. Assurance fills the soul with praise and thankfulness. The real presence of a mercy is not enough, but there must be the appearance of a mercy, and the sense of it, before it fill thy heart with joy, and thy mouth with praise. A doubting Christian is like a bird entangled and in a snare, the soul has not its comfort, nor God has not his praise: But an assured Christian is like a Bird at liberty, that flies aloft, and sings most chearfully; It begins those *Hallelujahs* in time, that must last for ever; It breaks out into the *Psalmist's* language, *Blesse the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, blesse his holy Name.*

Observ. 4. The fourth and last Observation which was propounded out of the Text was: **That the way to make our Election sure, is first to make our Calling sure.** And this is sufficiently warranted from the just order and method of this Apostolical exhortation, *Make your Calling and Election sure*; First your Calling, then your Election; and by your Calling, your Election: *Methodus Analytica* best becoming Creatures.

Many

Many have handled this point at large; I shall do it very briefly, and I shall give you all that I intend to speak to it in these six particulars.

I. Election in it self is secret and mysterious. For 1. it is from eternity, and so there was none could know it but God alone; none could know Election but he that made an Election. A Being that is spanned by time, cannot reach to what was done from everlasting: You cannot imagine that non-entity should listen and hear what was whispered in the secret Council of Heaven. Thou goest only by the Clock of time; but those decrees were written with an eternal Sun-beam; thou turnest up thy houre-glasse of time, but these were measured by an infinite duration. Was it possible that Esau not born should see God frowning on him; or that Jacob should perceive a smile? Thou art as far from meriting Election as a non-entity, and thou art as far from knowing it as a non-entity. 2. God has a minde to keep it secret, and therefore he has set a seal upon it; not only a seal of certainty, but a seal of secrecy. You know creatures themselves have their closet-determinations; men have their thoughts under lock and key; they have not windows into one anothers breasts, much lesse into the breast

of a Deity. Thou canst not fathom sometimes a shallow creature, and dost thou think to reach to the bottom of infinite depths? Has God given thee secret springs of working; has he made the wheels and motions of thy soul secret, and undiscernable, and may he not have the same privilege himself? So then, if God has put a vail upon Election, dost thou think to see into it? When he has shut and clasp't the book of Life, dost thou think to open it and read it?

II. Vocation comments upon Election. Gods decrees, that were set from everlasting, do bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit in time. Election buds in a promise, and blossoms in an offer of grace. The Book was written before the foundations of the world were laid; but it was not publisht till God himself gave it an *Impri-matur*. The Letters was dated from eternity; the Supercription was writ in time, in Vocation. Now you know though the Letter be writ first, yet the Supercription is read first by him that receives the Letter. 'Twas decreed from eternity that Decrees should be known in time. And the πλησμε is χεῖν, χεῖν πλησμε, the fulness of time, is the time when Gods decrees are fulfilled. When the decrees of God are ripe, then he lets the soul taste them; and then they are sweetest. Then thou perceivest that thou art a
which

vessel of honour, when God puts thee upon an honourable imployment. That fountain of love which ran under ground for everlasting, bubbles up and flowes to thee in time. That λογος ἐν δὲ ἐκ-
θῆ/ος that was in Election, becomes λογος
ἐκφορεῖς in Vocation. Thus thoughts of men, when they would appear, they put on words; they take wings to themselves and flie away.

III. There is a strict and an inseparable connexion betwixt Election and Vocation. For who is there that can blast the decrees of Heaven, or who can reverse the Seal of the Almighty? Who can break one link of this golden chain? To be sure, 'tis not in the power of created Beings to evacuate and annihilate the Counsels of God. A creature, as it had no influence upon Election, so neither has it any power to alter it. A shadow does not alter the Sun, but rather shews you what time of the day it is. And then to be sure God himself will not reverse his own seal. *Nulla est litura in decretis sapientum*, say the Stoicks; A wise man will scorn to blot out any thing. *Nullæ sunt lituræ in libro vitæ*. God is so full of light, as that there is no shadow of change in him. Therefore, has God pickt thee out as a Jewel, and laid thee up in a secret repository, in the Cabinet of his secret counsel? He will then bring thee out, and shew thee in time;

he means to polish thee, and put a lustre upon thee; he means to set thee as a Diamond in his Ring, and to put thee upon the hand of a Saviour. Did God from all eternity resolve to set thee as a captive soul at liberty? Truly then thou needest not doubt, but that he will in time break open the prison-doors; and beat off thy chains and thy fetters, and give thee full enlargement. God has been preparing a feast for thee from everlasting, a feast of sweet and fat things, a refined, an Evangelical feast: To be sure then he will invite thee in time; he will stand at thy door and knock; nay, he will compel thee to come into it. God glanced an eye of love upon thee, when thou layest hid in the barren wombe of nothing; to be sure then in time he means to wooe thee, and to win thee, and to espouse thee to himself in faithfulness and in truth.

I V. Election and Vocation, though in respect of us they have gradual and climbing accomplishments; yet in respect of God they are equally present. For there is no succession in eternity. There can be no *Prius & posterius* where there was no beginning. 'Tis true, that our infinite Beings, as they cannot sufficiently grasp an infinite essence, so neither can they measure an infinite Duration. And therefore, our under-

stan-

standings put many times several periods there, where there ought not to be the least *Comma*, because we span out things by our own narrow Duration.

For Duration is nothing else but *permanentia in esse*, a continuation and abiding in Being, the spinning out of Entity: And therefore as the soul cannot see the face of God, so neither can it see the vastness of his Duration, which is a dequate and commensurate to the Degree of his Entity. So that we being but of yesterday, are not competent Judges of Eternity. And as the soul imprisoned in a body, can but darkly conceive of spiritual Beings, and cannot behold the lustre & orieny of an *Angel*, nor it cannot behold its own beauty, much lesse is it able to behold the glory of God himself: So being here conversant with transient things that have their *Orcum & Occasum*, their *Fluxum & Refluxum*, their Spring and Autumne, their bounds and their bottom, and dwelling among temporals; 'tis not so well acquainted with the vast Duration of eternity. And yet it can far better behold the back parts of Eternity, then the face of it; Eternity *a parte post*, then Eternity *a parte ante*; because the soul it self is measured by that Duration. Whereas only that one supreme Being, God himself has the compleatness and perfecti-

on of eternity. No wonder then that our understandings put several periods there, where there ought not to be the least *comma*, because we span out things by our own Duration; that which bubbles from eternity, comes flowing to us in time. But Vocation is as eternal as Election; In respect of God, *Jacob* was as soon called as he was chosen, and that not only in respect of the secret counsel and decree of God; but whensoever God does actually call *Jacob*, he calls him *ab Aeterno*; for Eternity is not at all spent and exhausted by continuance, but is alwayes *in vigore viridi*. 'Tis a flourishing Duration that never withers nor decays. Indeed Vocation is nothing else but Election pulling off her veil, and smiling upon the soul, and telling her that God loves her, and manifests and displayes his love to her.

V. It is altogether irregular and anomalous for the soul. 1. To prye into Election. 'Tis dangerous to tread on the highest round first; and here it is impossible. Thus the soul forgets that it is a creature, it forgets its own Duration, and would be measuring it self by Eternity. The windows of the soul must be set open for the entertaining of such light as does more immediately flow in upon it; and the understanding must

must close and comply with such objects as are best proportioned to it. Now you know that those things which are first intelligible in their own nature, yet are not alwayes first presented to the view and eye of the soul. For whatsoever is first in Being may first be known; Entity being the root and just foundation of intelligibility. And yet sometimes secondary and junior Entity is fain to prepare the way like a *John Baptist* for one that comes after it, and yet was in worth and being before it.

Thus sometimes the causes of things lurk, and lie coucht, they hide their heads; only a little flourish out at the Latesses, peeping out of an effect or two. Thus the Text may be in Hebrew, when the Commentary is in Latine; many may understand the one, that cannot read the other. Election, it is the Original; Vocation, 'tis the interlineary gloss: of the help of weak-beginners. If God should let thee see into Election before Vocation, it were the only way to frustrate and disappoint his own decree. For if God should shew thee thy name in the Book of Life, before thy heart were changed and renewed; what would this but make thee sin more securely, and turn his grace into wantonness?

ness? Whereas the wisdom of God never determines the end, but it also determines the means; and as the end is alwayes glorious, so also are the means powerful and efficacious. Now thou canst not more clearly demonstrate that thou art in a good tendency and proximity to the end, then by a thankful use and seasonable application of the means. And what do they do but lay a snare for their own souls, that catch and entangle themselves with such a desperate fallacy as this is; If we be elected, we shall be unquestionably saved; and if we be not elected, we shall be unavoidably damned, and therefore we may do what we list. O what a bold and blasphemous inference is this! What is this else, but to distil the rankest poison out of the richest and most severaigh cordial? To kindle Hell out of a spark of Heavenly truth, which if it were blown up gently by the spirit that breathed it, and kept within its just bounds; 'twould only cheere, quicken and enliven the soul. Because thou dost not as yet know whether thou art a Vessel of honour, wilt thou therefore presently dash thy self in pieces? because thou dost not for the present certainly know that thou shalt come safe to the Haven, wilt thou therefore court the waves, rush upon a Rock, and
make

make Shipwrack of faith and a good conscience? would'st thou do thus in temporals? Why, thou dost not know how long thou shalt live, the number of thy dayes is certainly fixt, and thy time is an appointed and determined time: wilt thou therefore refuse to lean upon the staffe of bread? Wilt thou not reparaire thine earthly and decaying Tabernacle? Wilt thou not maintain the Oil in the cruze? that *Balsamum radicale*, with such fresh supplies as are afforded to thee? Wilt thou break thy glasse in pieces, because thou canst not tell how long it will run.

Is it not a mercy that God vouchsafes thee the means? Why should thou distrust of obtaining the end, more then any other? There is not a Curtain that hides Election more from thee then from any other; 'tis equally hid to all, till it shine forth upon some in the use of means, till the Curtain be drawn, and then it will equally shine out upon thee, if thou usest the same means. If all should argue as thou dost, there would none be saved; if all men, because Election is absolute and uncertaine, should resolve to live as they list; who

who would then set his face towards *Canaan*? where would God have any glory in the world? What would become of his great name? but he will root out such an unsavory principle as this is out of the hearts of all that love him; and that truth which is made a fatal stumbling-block to some, shall prove a solid foundation of joy and sweetness unto them. The very possibility of Election should banish all such thoughts as these. Who can tell but God may have been gracious unto thee, and have fixt an eye of love upon thee? Oh then breath after him, pant and long for him, desire him to expresse his minde to thee, to communicate his love to thee.

Besides, though thou dost not know Election, will meer love do nothing? Though thy God did not intend to glorifie thee; yet thou shouldest intend to glorifie him; Though he does not chuse thee for his Servant, yet thou shouldest chuse him for thy Lord. There is worth in him, though there be none in thee.

Resolve that into what condition soever he throw thee, though into Hell it self, that there thou wilt love him, and there thou wilt praise him, and long for him; that there thou wilt adore and honour him, and wilt grieve only for this, that thou canst honour him no more; that
thou

thou wilt admire his goodness to others, his justice to thee; I, and his goodness to thee too, that layes lesse upon thee then thou deservest. Such thoughts as these would make hell it self lightsom.

VI. As Election is secret and mysterious, so Vocation may be easily known. That Astrologer was deservedly laught at, that was so intently gazing upon the Stars, so admiring their twinkling beauties, as that unawares he tumbled into the water; whereas before, if he had but been pleased to look so low as the water, he might have seen the Stars there represented in that Cryстал glasse. Such as will needs be prying into the Stars, that will ascend up into heaven, and gaze upon Election; they do but dazle their eyes, and sometimes by this are overwhelmed in the depths of Satan: whereas they might easily see the Stars in the water; they might see Election in Sanctification, in Regeneration. Now Vocation does plainly and easily appear by that great and eminent alteration which it brings along with it. It is a powerful Call, 'tis an audible and quickening voice; the voice of the first Trumpet that awakens men out of the graves, and makes them happy, by having their part in the first Resurrection; great and sudden alterations

tions they are very discernable. Now here is a most notorious, and signal change made; *Old things are past away, and all things are become new*: here is a change from death to life, from darkness to light; and what more discernable then this? A living man may know that he is alive, and that without any further proof or demonstration, whatever the *Scepticks* old or new would perswade us to the contrary; Will you not allow a man to be certain that he lives, till a jury of life and death hath past upon him?

Could not the blind man in the Gospel (think you) perceive when his eyes were opened? could he not easily tell that now he could see and discern variety of objects? or must he only conjecture that he sees, and guesse at a Sun-beam? must he still at noon-day go groping in uncertainties. And is there not an easie and sure difference between those thick veils and shadows of the night, between those dark and Ethiopick looks, and the virgin blushes of the morning; those beautiful eye-lids of the day? The smiling and flowerings out of light, much more the advancement of light to its Zenith and Noon-day-glory? And why then cannot an Intellectual eye discern as well, that now it sees? that now it looks upon God with an eye of love,
with

with an eye of faith, with an eye of confidence? and that now God looks upon him with an eye of tenderness and compassion, with an eye of grace and favour, with an eye of delight and approbation? Who but an *Anaxagoras* will go about to perswade a man to disbelieve his eyes? and if a corporal eye deserve such credit why may not a spiritual eye then expect as much? *Say not then in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Assurance from above? who shall unclasp the Book of Life that is sealed, and turn thee to thy name? or who shall bring thee a Certificate that is written there? Behold, it is nigh thee, even in thy heart :* The work of grace there, the Law written on the tables of thine heart, by the finger of the spirit is the exemplification and counterpane of that Decree; the safest way, the best way, the only way to make sure of Election, is first to make sure of thy Vocation; *Make your Calling and Election sure.*

FINIS.

